THE Day of Grace,

In which the Chief of

SINNERS

MAY BE

Turn'd and healed.

By *Nathanael Vincent.*

2 Cor. 6. 2.

Behold, now is the accepted time; Behold, now is the day of salvation.

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To the Reader.

THIS not at all improper to add a Treatiſe of the Day of Grace, to a Diſcourſe concerning Converſion. This is the only time wherein he that turns will be accepted: Oh therefore receive not the Grace of God in vain. Though the ſinner by his iniquity is removed far away from God, the Gulph notwithſtanding is not yet fixed. We are caſt out by Nature in a far Country indeed, but this Country is not Hell, though juſt upon the borders of Hell: a return is poſſible unto our Fathers houſe; and upon our return how joyfully ſhall we be embraced!

One principal reaſon why Time is ſo exceeding precious, is, becauſe it contains the Day of Grace. This pre-

ſent time, though ſo very ſhort, is of greater value then an whole Eternity hereafter; for then mercy will be out of reach, and Reprobates unalterably concluded in ſin, and under the heavy load of divine vengeance and indignation. This is the Day of thy gracious viſitation: Waſte it not away in doing nothing, or which is worſe, in doing wickedly; for there is another day a coming, which will be a day of darkneſs and of gloominess, a day of diſtreſs and deſtruction, if Grace and Salvation be neglected.

N. V.

The

The Day of Grace.

Luke 19. 41, 42.

And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

THe time was now approaching in which our Lord was to make his Soul an offering for ſin, and to teſtifie his love to his Sheep, by laying down his life, to redeem theirs from death, which by going aſtray they had deſerved. And *Jeruſalem* is appointed the Stage,

Stage; on which Christ was to act the greatest part, both of sorrow and affection. Well might he cry out, *Behold ye that pass by; Was ever Grief*, and *Was ever Love like Mine?* Unto *Jerusalem* he comes most willingly, though he foresaw the Cross and shame. The Head was forward to suffer himself, that hereby the sufferings of the Members might be prevented. And according as it was foretold by the Prophet, his approach is not with outward pomp and splendour; but he is meek and lowly, riding upon an Asses Foal. Thus he that thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself to this end, that we might be raised and exalted.

When he was just at the descent of the Mount of *Olives*, *the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works which they had seen*, v. 37. They cry *Hosanna to the Son of David, and bless the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, saying, Peace in heaven and glory in the highest*, v. 38. Even through the

the darkeſt cloud of Chriſts Humiliation, ſome beams and rayes of this Sun of Righteouſneſs, of this Lord of glory, did break forth. The Phariſees are offended at the Diſciples acclamations, and *deſire Jeſus to rebuke them*, *v.* 39. Unto which unreaſonable requeſt of theirs he makes this reply, *That if theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out*, *v.* 40. As if he had ſaid, My Perſon, my Doctrine, my Actions, my Wonders are ſo evident, that they who are not as ſtupid as the ſtones themſelves muſt needs be convinced.

At laſt he comes within view of *Jeruſalem*, and the ſight of this faithleſs, ungrateful and obſtinate City, where ſo many Prophets had been kill'd, and which now it ſelf was ſo near to deſolation, raiſes a ſorrow in his ſacred breaſt, ſo that in the midſt of his Diſciples triumph he burſts out into tears, ſaying, *If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

Which words expreſs how our Lord

was affected towards *Jerusalems* Inhabitants. His commiseration is very great, and 'tis joyned with a kind of exprobration or upbraiding of them: he pitties their sad estate, and upbraids their ignorance, and folly, in not minding the things which would have conduced to their peace and welfare.

The text may be thus divided.

1. Our Saviour mourns: *When he came near, he beheld, and wept.*

2. The persons over whom: *The City of Jerusalem.*

3. The causes why, and they are these,

1. *They know not, no not they* who had so much means of knowledge, *the things that belonged to their peace.*

2. They improved not, but neglected *Their day* of visitation.

3. This neglect and ignorance of theirs being wilful, was punished with a greater degree of blindness, *Now they are hid from thine eyes*, and that was a judgment most deplorable.

Beloved, I am to speak of the Day of Grace I wish you may all know the things which

which concern your peace, else *Jerusalems* punishment may be also yours; the day may be gone, the lights of the Sanctuary may be put out, and the things of your peace may be hid from your eyes.

I shall illustrate the words of the Text by this ensuing Commentary upon them.

And when he was come near, he beheld the City. The nearness of a miserable object does affect the sight and heart. And as with his eyes he saw the City, so by the eyes of Prophesie he saw the City besieged, the enemy casting a trench about it, and keeping it in on every side; he foresaw how it would be laid even with the ground by *Roman* Armies, and not so much as one stone left upon another.

And he wept over it. These tears shewed the truth of his humane nature, and how (iniquity excepted) he was in all things made like unto his brethren. Our Lord could hunger, and groan, and weep, and dye, but sin indeed he could not, *Heb.* 4. 15. It was the desire of Christ to execute th office which his Father had

put

put him in, which was to be a Gatherer and a Saviour of the loſt Sheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*: But when he perceived thoſe Sheep transformed into Wolves, ready to devour their own Shepherd, peremptorily reſolved to periſh, and to refuſe the ſalvation which he brought them; 'tis no wonder if he did not hold his tears.

Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou. There is a mixture of grief and indignation in Chriſt, at the ignorance and perverſneſs of miſerable *Jeruſalem*; and this made his ſpeech to be abrupt and imperfect. *Calvin* tranſlates ὅτι εἰ ἔγνως, *O ſi cognoviſſes!* Our Lord wiſhes that they had known what ſo highly and nearly concerned them. But 'tis plainly implied that they *knew not*: and this is that of which the Prophet long ago complained, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *The Ox knows his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters crib, but Iſrael doth not know, my people do not conſider.* Καὶ σύ, *even thou*; this is very emphatical. As if Chriſt ſhould have ſaid, O thou *Jeruſalem*, who haſt enjoyed ſo many means and mercies, and haſt

ſlighted

ſlighted and abuſed them all; notwithſtanding all former folly and unkindneſs to God, to thy ſelf, I wiſh that *even thou*, wouldſt at laſt have open'd thy eyes and ears, and become wiſe unto thy own ſalvation.

At leaſt in this thy day. That was a day of ſpecial viſitation. God who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, in that day ſpake unto them by his Son. And although many Meſſengers and Servants which were ſent, had been deſpiſed and perſecuted to the death by them, yet at leaſt the Son ſhould have been reverenced. This was *their* day, a time in which they might have been accepted, a day in wch ſalvation was brought near to them.

The things which belong unto thy peace! Peace (according to the Hebrew phraſe) does imply all the parts of happineſs, the principal whereof does certainly lie in being reconciled to, and enjoying God. But the way of peace and reconciliation, namely, Juſtification by faith in Jeſus, they knew not. An humbled Meſſiah,

who

who was *to make mens peace by the blood of his cross*, *Col.* 1.20. they hid their faces from, and esteemed him not: Being puffed up with their own righteousness and external priviledges and prerogatives, they would not submit unto the righteousness of faith which is revealed in the Gospel.

But now they are hid from thy eyes. Christ here sets forth the spiritual judgment which they lay under, and likewise removes the scandal and offence which his infirm Disciples might be apt to take, because *Jerusalem* did reject him. They had long refused to look unto the Lord, that they might be saved; and now God sends them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, and hearts that they should never understand. This is a very sore and yet usual punishment, when men receive the grace of God in vain, and are resolved to walk contrary to the light which shines about them.

The Text does yield several points of Doctrine.

First, *Jesus Christ is exceeding full of pity*

pity and compaſſion. His weeping here over *Jeruſalem*, ſhews how kindly affectioned he was towards them, and is towards others in miſery.

Secondly, *The Lord does grant unto ſinners a day of grace, in which pardon and life are proffer'd to them, and may be obtained by them.* If thou hadſt known in this thy day.

Thirdly, *To know in this day of grace the things which belong to our peace, is our great happineſs and wiſdom.* If *Jeruſalem* had been ſo wiſe, her ruine would have been prevented.

Fourthly, *When ſinners will not ſee, they are ſmitten many times with ſpiritual blindneſs, and the things of their peace are in a way of judgment hid from them.*

Fifthly, *Souls being thus left under darkneſs, their ſtate is wretched and deplorable.* Our Lord with tears laments this ſad condition of *Jeruſalem.*

Doct. 1. The firſt Doctrine is this, *That Jeſus Chriſt is exceeding full of pity and compaſſion.* The tears which he ſhed prove this; and if tears will not ſatiſ-

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he; a little after you may behold him shedding of his blood.

This compassion of Christ extends it self to them that perish, as well as unto those he saves.

To them that perish his compassion is seen in four things.

1. *In causing the Light whereby he is discovered to shine upon them.* 'Tis a mercy that the lost are told of a Saviour, that they are informed how sin hath caused their misery, and Christ is sufficient to cure it. Nay herein σπλάγχνα ἐλέους. *Tender mercy appears, that the Day-spring from on high does visit them that sit in darkness, which can guide their feet into the way of peace,* Luke 1. 78, 79. They need not say, *Who shall ascend into heaven,* to understand the means of fallen mans recovery? *The word is nigh,* which can give a sufficient information. 'Twas the great advantage of the *Jews, that to them were committed the Oracles of God,* Rom. 3. 1, 2. But now those Oracles are pronounced more fully and plainly; and to enjoy them is the priviledge of such, as in a Land of light have their lot given them.

them. It was great mercy towards Capernaum, that she was lifted up to Heaven, that such words were spoken, that such works were done in her; and because she improved not the mercy, how does our Lord upbraid her?

2. Christs compassion towards them that perish is seen, *in calling and inviting them to come to him.* The Marriage-feast is prepared, and the servants are sent into the high-wayes, to invite all to come, and partake of it, *Matth.* 22. *Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, she cryeth in the chief places of concourse; How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? and scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? turn ye at my reproof,* &c. *Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22. And *Prov.* 9. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. we read, *Wisdom hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, and furnished her table, she hath sent forth her maidens, she cryeth upon the highest places of the City; Whoso is simple let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith unto him, come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine which I have mingled; forsake*

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the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding. Thus sinners are called after, and though dogs, yet the same bread which is prepared for the children is proffer'd to them; the same inestimable benefits of Christ as pardon, peace, grace, glory, are tendred to them, which believers have accepted of; with the same eye-salve their eyes shall be annointed; with the same tried gold they shall be enriched; with the same white rayment all their nakedness shall be covered, if they will but come and close with Jesus.

3. Christs compassion towards them that perish is seen, *in waiting long that he may be gracious*; he knocks at the door, and he *stands* knocking there, *Rev.* 3 20. He stands *till his head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.* He sees how Satan hath admission at his pleasure, and unto *Mammon* at first approach the door is set wide open to receive him, but against Christ 'tis lock'd and bolted; and yet his love and patience overcomes these indignities, and he waits still to see, if at last sinners will consult

conſult their own good, and entertain him. Chriſt by his Spirit ſtrives long, checking them from ſin, moving them to duty, demonſtrating the reaſonableneſs of converſion and obedience, the danger of continuance in their provocations. Chriſt does not go away at the firſt repulſe, nor curſe the Fig-tree for the firſt years unfruitfulneſs, but he digs about it and dungs it, and expects a great while, before that ſentence be pronounced, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?*

4 Chriſts compaſſion towards them that periſh, is ſeen, *in wiſhing, when for their obſtinacy they are given over to themſelves, that they would have hearkened and obeyed.* Thus he weeps and wiſhes, that *Jeruſalem* had known what they were ignorant of. And *Iſrael*, when for their wilfulneſs unto, and refuſing of God, they were given up to their own hearts luſts, and ſuffer'd to walk after their own counſels, the Lord wiſhes, *O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Iſrael had walked in my ways!* *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12, 13. Thoſe that periſh will have no reaſon to complain of Chriſt, but of themſelves;

he wanted not pitty, but to themselves they were unmerciful.

But in the second place; the compassion of our Lord is manifested, and that principally to them that are saved; they are called *Vessels of mercy.*

1. *Christ receives those he saves, though they come home in rags:* The beggarliness of the Prodigal did not hinder his Father from running to him, and embracing him. Their emptiness of worth doth not stir up his hatred, but his pitty. Christ hath enough, and to spare for them. Sinners should not keep off from Christ, because they cannot bring any grace of their own to commend them: He can put comeliness upon those, who by sin are never so much deformed. When we come to our Lord we are overspread with a leprosie, (iniquity is fitly called by that name) and all our righteousness is as filthy rags; now what mercy is it, that he takes away our filthy garments, and puts upon us the robe of his own righteousness, and from that worst sort of leprosie doth make us clean?

2. *Christ*

2. *Christ makes reconciliation for the sins of those who are saved by him.* And considering what woe and misery sin unpardon'd exposes the children of men to, 'tis an act of mercy to make an atonement for it. *Heb.* 2. 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* That load of *guilt* and *wrath*, which else would sink them into the lowest Hell, the Lord Jesus takes off from the Heirs of salvation.

3. *Christ heals the wounds which their spiritual enemies have made.* The good *Samaritan* had compassion upon the man that fell among thieves, *Luke* 10. Our Lord finds us in a worse case; what wounds have our lusts and Satan made in our spirits? and truly they are incurable by any but this Physician. When the fiery Serpents had stung the *Israelites*, they looked unto the Brazen Serpent, and looking, they were healed presently. That Brazen Serpent typified Jesus Christ, and although Conscience

be never so much sting, yet He can expel the poyson, and asswage the pain and anguish, and make the Conscience first pure, and after peaceable.

4. *Christ gives rest unto them that labour, and are heavy laden*, Matth. 11. 28. Many are the burthens of believers, but he commands them to cast all their burthens upon him, and he promises to sustain them. The curse of the Law is a burthen, but *Christ redeems them from the curse of the Law, being himself made a curse for them*, Gal. 3. 13. They groan under the dominion of sin, the bondage of corruption, but the Son of God pulls down sins dominion, and makes them free indeed. Their poverty and emptiness causes them to sigh and complain; but Christ Jesus unlocks his unsearchable riches, which are superabundantly sufficient to replenish them. And he that commands *the rich in this world, to be ready to distribute, to be willing to communicate*, surely himself will in no wise be a Niggard of his spiritual Treasures.

5. *Christ succours those he saves, in their temptation.* In the hour of tempta-

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tion they very much need his pitty and aid, and they have both. *Dido*, in *Virgil*, ſpake thus to the *Trojans*, who were caſt upon her Coaſts,

Non ignara mali miſeris ſuccurrere diſco,

I that have endured miſery my ſelf, know how to compaſſionate and ſuccour the miſerable. Our Lord himſelf, he had experience of temptations, and he will relieve thoſe that are aſſaulted as he was. Hark to the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 2. 18. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he knows how to ſuccour them that are tempted.* He knows that believers enemies are above their match; that ſin, and the world, and the God of it would be too hard for them; therefore his own Power doth reſt upon them, which brings them out of the field more then Conquerours.

The Application follows.

USE I.

If our Lord be ſo compaſſionate, *hereby Faith may be marvellouſly encouraged.*

How safely and gladly may a Soul venture it self in the hands of such an one? Those are unacquainted with his Bowels, that entertain hard thoughts concerning him. Why art thou cast down, O desponding spirit? Why art thou so much disquieted? Why doest thou credit the unreasonable suggestions of the Wicked one? Though he be the Father of lyes, yet a greater lye he never tells, then when he doth perswade thee, that Christ is unwilling to receive them, that see their need of him, and long after him.

1. *If he weep over the obstinate, do ye think he will be hard-hearted to the penitent?* If he stretch forth his hands all the day long to the disobedient and gainsaying, will not his Arms be open to embrace the obedient and complying? If he goes into the far Country to seek thee, when he has inclined thy heart to come home, will he shut the door against thee?

2. Consider for the encouragement of faith, *That these compassions of Christ do far transcend and exceed all human mercies.* A Mothers bowels do yern, especially

towards her ſucking Infant; and yet even theſe are Marble compared with the bowels of Chriſt. Hark how *Zion* is reproved for her hard ſurmiſes, *Iſai.* 49. 14, 15. *But Zion hath ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee.* How unwilling is a Mother to bring forth Children for the Murtherer? And much more unwilling is this Saviour, that any Soul, which is deſirous to be ſanctified and ſaved, ſhould become the Devils prey.

3. Conſider, *His compaſſions are joyned with ſuch a fulneſs, that there is nothing miſerable ſinners need, but out of this fulneſs they may have abundant ſupply.* Our Lord hath power as well as pitty, why then ſhould we not truſt in him, and go to him at all times, ſince his power thews him ſo able, and his pitty proves him ſo willing to relieve and ſave?

USE II.

Since Christ is so compassionate, *surely 'tis unreasonable to quarrel at, and refuse to submit unto his yoak:* The yoak of such a merciful one, must needs be granted an easie yoak, and his burthen a light burthen. *Matth.* 11.30. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Marriage.* And as the Wives subjection unto a tender and indulgent Husband is sweet and pleasant, so, and much more pleasant is the Believers subjection unto Christ. Ungodly ones are strangely prejudiced against the Scepter and Government of Jesus; but indeed 'tis without cause; they say, *We will not have this Lord to reign over us.* 'Tis a mercy to be translated into his Kingdom, for then you are freed from other Lords, which are so imperious, so cruel, and will reward with death all the service which you do for them. All the precepts of Christ are for your profit, and he forbids you nothing, but what he sees will harm you.

Methinks at the reading of this, the most stubborn should yield and say

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We ſtood out againſt the Lord of life, but 'twas upon a miſtake; we did not think his ſervice was ſo near a kin to freedom; we once imagined his commands grievous, therefore we caſt them behind our backs; but now we are reſolved to obey no other, ſince they are to be eſteemed above gold, nay, the fineſt gold, and are ſweeter then the honey and the honey-comb.

USE III.

Since our Lord is ſo merciful, *let me perſwade you to the imitation of him; put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies.* Among the company of bleſſed ones, the merciful are numbred, *for they ſhall obtain mercy, Matth.* 5. 7. Your own ſouls, and the ſouls of others ſhould be the ſpecial objects of your pitty. Let your own ſouls be wept over, becauſe guilty of ſo much ſin, and becauſe by ſuch prodigious defilements rendered ſo much unlike unto an holy God. 'Twas a ſaying of a Father, *Flebam merituram Didonem, me mortuum non flebam.* I wept when I read the ſtory of *Dido* about to kill her ſelf, but my own condition, though

though quite dead in ſin, I bewailed not. Look into your ſelves, and you may behold matter enough for mourning, freſh guilt and ſtains added to what were before; here be liberal of your ſorrow, where 'tis ſo very well deſerved. The ſouls of others too ſhould have a ſhare in your compaſſion; Oh weep over kindred, neighbours, that ſtill are ignorant, aliens, enemies, and wiſh, and pray, that they may know the things which belong to their peace, before they are hid from their eyes!

Thus of the firſt Doctrine.

Doct. 2. The ſecond follows, *That the Lord does grant unto ſinners a Day of Grace, in which pardon and life are proffer'd to them, and may be obtained by them.* If thou hadſt known in this thy day. This day we read of, *Heb.* 3. 7, 8. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* Now Gods voice is heard, and that heart is both wicked and fooliſh, which hardens it ſelf. See alſo 2 *Cor.* 6. 1, 2. *We then, as workers together with him, beſeech you, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain;*

vain: for he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccour'd thee; Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation. Thoſe words (*I have heard thee in a time accepted, in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccour'd thee*) are ſpoken by God the Father unto Chriſt his Son. Chriſt himſelf had (in ſome ſenſe) a Day of Grace, in which the Father was well pleaſed with him; in which the Sacrifice, which he offered up once for the ſins of all, was accepted; in which his ſtrong cryes for himſelf, that he might be carried through the difficult work of Mans Redemption, were heard; and accordingly he was ſuccour'd, and enabled to work out a compleat ſalvation for the children of men. And hence it comes to paſs, that unto them alſo a day of grace is granted, in which they may be accepted, and ſalvation is brought near them, that they may lay hold upon it.

My work in the handling of this truth will be: Firſt, to ſhew upon what account the Seaſon of Grace is called a Day. Secondly, to declare what are the privi-

priviledges of this Day of Grace. Thirdly, to lay down the properties of it. Fourthly, I shall give some reasons why such a day is granted. And then conclude with the Application.

First, Upon what account the Season of Grace is called a Day.

1. The Season of Grace is called a Day, *in regard of the light that then shines.* The Sun of Righteousness is risen, and this Day is made by that Suns shining. *Light* from the Gospel *springs up unto them, which* else would have *sat in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, Matth.* 4. 16. By this light things are discover'd which were hid from Ages and Generations. Gods eternal counsel to glorifie his Grace in the pardon, adoption, cleansing and saving of men, that have all sinn'd, and thereby come short of his glory, is by this light made manifest.

The light of Nature is but weak and dim, and cannot make it day; it gives such a discovery both of God and sin, as is sufficient to leave those that sin against God without excuse, *Rom.* 1. 20. But the way how enemies may be reconciled

conciled it cannot ſhew. Nay, becauſe the firſt Covenant ran thus, *Do this and live*, the light of Nature doth ſtrongly incline us to put a confidence in our own works, then which nothing is more contrary to the Goſpel of the Grace of God.

But though the Light of Nature be apt to lead out of the way, as well as imperfect, the Light of the Goſpel is ſufficient. All that are now in glory made uſe of this Guide in their paſſage through the world. *David*, *Pſal.* 19. doth make a compariſon between the Light of Nature, and that of the Word: From the Heavens, Firmament, Sun, and Moon, and other Creatures, ſomething of the Glory of God may be diſcover'd; but then after he adds, *The Law of the Lord is perfect*; as if he had ſaid, From the Word ſhines forth a greater light, then from the Sun, and Moon, and Stars; a light, which guides infallibly to the Light that's everlaſting. And this Light is one thing, which makes the Day the text ſpeaks of.

2. The Seaſon of Grace is called a Day, *in that it is deſign'd for working.* When

When the day comes, *though the beasts gather themselves, and lay them down in their dens, yet man arises and goes forth to his work and labour till the evening*, Psal. 104.22,23. In like manner, this day of the Gospel; though they, who are brutish, lay them down in the bed of ease, and fall asleep in carnal security, yet such as have the understanding of men, will go forth unto their work and labour; and surely they who have lusts to mortifie, a world to overcome, a devil to resist, and souls to save, have work enough to do. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* (sayes our Lord in the Parable) *Matth.* 20.6. Spiritual sloth is now unseasonable and unreasonable. Now is the time, and the only time, for working. *Whatever therefore our hand finds to do, we should do it with our whole might.* The Painter gave a good reason, why in his Piece he was so accurate, *In Immortalitatem pingo*, I paint for immortality; intimating, that the picture he made, was to continue in view after he was dead and gone: So we should say, *In Æternitatem operamur*, Our dayes work is for Eternity, therefore we dare not trifle. The

Church

Church is likened unto a Vineyard, and every one ſhould be a labourer.

3. The Seaſon of Grace is called a Day, *in regard of the brevity and ſhorteſt of its continuance*; It cannot exceed the term of natural life, and how ſhort that is experience ſhews, and the Scripture to affect us, doth expreſs by ſeveral notable ſimilitudes: Sayes the Apoſtle, *What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little while, and then vaniſheth away*, Jam. 4. 14. And *Job* 9. 25, 26. *Now my dayes are ſwifter then a poſt, they flee away, and ſee no good; they are paſſed away as the ſhips of deſire, as the Eagle that haſteth to the prey.* How faſt doth the Poſt ride? how ſwiftly doth the Ship ſail? what haſte doth the hungry Eagle make to the prey? Such ſpeed, O man, O woman, thou art making towards another world. The Day of Grace ſhortens as thy life ſhortens; reflect upon the opportunities thou haſt loſt with grief, condemn thy folly, and be ſo wiſe as now to redeem time, by doubled care and diligence.

And as this Day of Grace cannot exceed the bounds of life, ſo it may come

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to a period before. Long resisting of the Spirit, and standing out against the means of Grace, the Lord may, and often doth punish, by resolving, his Spirit shall strive no longer, and that to the working of Grace, the means shall never be made effectual: The accepted time is not αἰων, but ἡμερα, not an *Age*, but a *Day*, and much of this day is gone already. Now as the Traveller being straitned, as to time, makes the greater speed, so should we in our Christian race; we should lay aside the clogs of the world, and the *weights of sin, that we may run with* the greater freedom and *patience*, *Hebr.* 12. 1.

We may observe great difference in the dayes of the year; very long they are in the midst of Summer, in comparison with what they are in the depth of Winter. And verily such an inequality there is between the day of grace, which some have, and which others do enjoy. And what knowest thou, O secure soul, who reckonest upon a long season yet to come, but that thy day of grace may prove as it were a winters day, having not half so many hours, as to others are allotted!

allotted! Rouze up thy ſelf therefore, and looſe no more of that time which is ſo exceeding ſhort at longeſt, and may be ſo much ſhorter then thou imagineſt.

4. The Seaſon of Grace is called a Day, *with relation to the night that is coming*; and when the night is come, thy main work cannot be done, if then it be undone; and if it be undone, thou thy ſelf art undone for ever. *I muſt work the work of him that ſent me while it is day* (ſayes Chriſt) *the night cometh, when no man can work*, *John* 9. 4. When the day of the righteous concludes, they reſt from their labour, and their works follow them; and though the night of death overſpreads their earthly tabernacle, yet their ſpirits are made perfect, and 'tis an everlaſting day of glory with them. And on the other ſide, when the day of the wicked comes to a period, either they are left under invincible blindneſs, and deadneſs, and obduration; and how can they work then, unleſs the works of darkneſs? or elſe death finiſhes both the day of life and grace together, and then 'twill be too late to think of working, for they will be bound hand

and foot, and thrown into outer darkness. When you hear of a day of grace, withall remember, that the night and darkne are hastning; and if so, for you to dela that great business, for which this day i afforded, shews the worst and most per nicious imprudence. Let me speak t you in the words of our Lord, *John* 12 35. *Yet a little while is the light wit you; walk while ye have the light, le darkness come upon you; for he that walk eth in darkness knoweth not whither he goet*

In the second place, I am to declar the priviledges of the Day of Grace These are Priviledges of inestimable va lue: the loss of these, and of the hope that ever they will be again enjoyed, i one thing which makes Hell so sad place. A time of trade and thriving i the world, a time of peace, and plenty and outward prosperity, though to b pray'd for and prized, yet it is nothing near so much to be prized as *the accepte time*, as *the day of salvation.*

The priviledges of the Day of Grace are these following.

1. *One is the enjoyment of the Word of God.* Because of this *Israel* of old was look'd

look'd upon as priviledg'd above the whole earth besides, *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. *He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments to the children of Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his Judgments they have not known them.* The Saints in Scripture, whose eyes were more fully open, and whose judgments were more clear, to apprehend the worth of things, what an estimate do they put upon the Word of God? What was *David's* judgment concerning it? He sayes, *Psal.* 119. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter then honey to my mouth:* And vers. 72. *The law of thy mouth is better unto me then thousands of gold and silver:* Indeed this whole Psalm may be called a Psalm of praise, that is to say, of the Word of God; and *David's* judgment is not to be undervalued, who is called, *a man after Gods own heart.* Holy *Job* esteemed this Word at an high rate, when he made that profession, it was valued *more then his necessary food, Job* 23. 12. Hence comes that Wisdom, which the Topaz of *Æthiopia* cannot equal, and the price whereof is above Rubies.

Now in the Day of Grace this Word is vouchsafed; you both have it to search into it your selves, and you have it opened and applied by the ministry of the Gospel.

1. *You may search into it your selves.* How many thousands under Antichristian bondage, enjoy not this priviledge, to have the Scriptures in a known tongue? The Word is the Souls food: Cruel Papists! who deny the soul bread. The Word is the Key, which unlocks the Treasures both of Grace and Glory: Cruel Papists! who take away the Key of knowledge, enter not themselves, and hinder those that would. The Word is the Souls weapon, whereby the Wicked one is is overcome: Cruel Papists! who took this weapon out of its hand, and so betrayed it into the hands of Satan. Though the command of Christ be express, to *search the Scriptures*, *Joh.* 5.39. Though the Apostle *Paul* sayes, *Let the Word dwell in you richly*, *Colos.* 3.16. Though *Timothy* from his childhood was admitted to, and made acquainted with *the Scriptures*, *which made him wise to salvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3.15. Though *Christ*

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ſoſtom (with whom the other Fathers generally as to this particular, agree) doth tell us, *Hom. 9. in Epiſt. ad Col.* Τῶν πάντων ἄπορον τῶν κακῶν, τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι τὰς γραφάς, That all evils are cauſed by the Scriptures ignorance: Yet unto how many, under Popery, are the Scriptues denied?

It was thus in this our Land not many ſcores of years ago, Romiſh darkneſs as thick here as in other places: But now the Buſhel is taken off from the Lamp of the Word, all may be enlightned and directed by it, which fooliſhly ſhut not their eyes againſt it. You have the Word in your houſes, in your hands; oh that it were in more heads and hearts! You may daily have recourſe to this Word, for counſel, for quickning, and comfort; and if you will but give up your ſelves to it, that Promiſe ſhall aſſuredly be fulfilled, *Prov. 6. 22. When thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee, when thou ſleepeſt it ſhall keep thee, when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee.* As the Word doth guide and guard them that entertain it, ſo it talks with them, it tells them of ſuch things, as draw forth their deſires,

inflame their love, put them upon labour, and fill them with unspeakable joy.

2. *You have this Word opened and applied by the ministry of the Gospel.* Ministers are yet with you, and that's a great priviledge, for *with them* Christ hath promised *to be always to the end of the world*, Matth. 28. *ult.* 'Tis their business to divide the Word, and to give to every one his portion. They foresee the storm, and warn the wicked to turn and fly unto a place of refuge; they encourage those who have true (though but weak) grace, and shew how those Promises and Comforts, which they hear of, belong to them, though they are so apt to thrust them away from themselves. Ministers, they do both bind and loose, they bind the impenitent and unbelieving sinner under the curse, under wrath, and he is bound in Heaven; for the sentence that the Gospel passes upon him, is in Heaven ratified. But if the impenitent soul is broken, mourns for sin, loaths it, leaves it; if the unbelieving sinner, which before rejected Christ, receives him, then Ministers have commission to loose him, whom before they bound, and

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he is looſed in Heaven; whom the Word declares juſtified, to be ſure the God of Heaven hath acquitted. And truly Miniſters bind with this deſign, that afterwards they may looſe; they denounce threats, that, ſinners being awakened and contrite, they may apply the Promiſes.

Theſe Ambaſſadours of Chriſt, come and intreat you to be reconciled unto God, and as they inform you upon what articles he will be at peace with you, ſo they uſe many arguments to work upon your conſciences and affections; they will not let you alone in your vanity, but Sabbath after Sabbath cry to you, and tell you, that when you ruſh into ſin you ruſh into a battel, and 'tis againſt that great God, who muſt needs be too hard for you: Who ever fought with him, and got any thing but blows, wounds and death? *Who ever hardned himſelf againſt him and proſpered?* Job 9. 4. They are ever commending Jeſus Chriſt to you, and declaring how able, and how willing he is to ſave you, and how certain you are to be damn'd without him. And is it not a priviledge to be thus importu-

ned for your own good? to have bleſſedneſs and life in a manner obtruded and forc'd upon you? Now Meſſengers of Peace are ſent in this Day of Grace; now glad tidings are brought, that God is willing to be reconciled; but when once you come to the Region of darkneſs below, ſuch tidings will never come to your ears more.

The greatneſs of this priviledge, to enjoy the Word, will further appear, if the admirable effects of the Word of God are duly conſidered.

1. *The Word of God doth make the ſimple wiſe*, Pſal. 119. 130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light, it giveth underſtanding to the ſimple.* Thoſe, whom Satan before befool'd, putting them off with huſks inſtead of what is ſolid and ſatisfying, are by the Word made too wiſe for this ſubtle Serpent: Now they are undeceived, and perceive how little fruit they have had of their evil works, therefore they are aſhamed of them, and of their own folly, in giving way to them. The Word diſcovers the pearl of price to them, and makes them wiſe Merchants, they ſell all to purchaſe it: This

wiſdom

wiſdom which the Word infuſes, *is not of this world, nor of the Princes of this world, which come to nought*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 6. The great ones of the earth may be prudent, in chuſing and ordering the means, for the attaining of the end which they aim at, but in the choice of their end, they diſcover the greateſt ſimplicity. All that greatneſs and glory, which they deſign, and themſelves alſo, will come to nought; Death will certainly and ſpeedily contract all their honour and power, and cover it with thoſe two words, *Hic jacet*, Here it all lies buried. But the wiſdom, which the Word imparts, makes us to look higher, *at a better and more enduring ſubſtance*, at *an inheritance which never fades away*: And the Word ſhews, how by ſanctification we may be prepared for that inheritance; and thoſe who are made meet to be ſo, ſhall at length be made partakers of it. While the Day of Grace laſteth, thou mayſt be made wiſe to ſalvation; but if this be not improved, *in the greatneſs of thy folly thou ſhalt go aſtray, and dye without inſtruction*, Prov. 5. 23.

2. *This*

2. *This Word doth raiſe the dead to life.* That Voice, *Ariſe ye dead and come to Jeſus*, muſt needs be powerful, ſince upon it follows the firſt Reſurrection; *John* 5. 25. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live.* At the hearing of this Word of God, the Conſcience, which was before ſtupid, is ſtartled; the heart, that was all of ſtone, becomes a heart of fleſh, it is tender and ſenſible, it feels the weight of ſin and of the curſe, and longs to be freed from both, thongh before it matter'd neither. A new principle of grace is put into the Soul, whereby it is inclined towards God, and acts for him. The Lord is breathed after, and there is a deſire to pleaſe him now, as there was formerly to pleaſe the fleſh, by fulfilling the luſts of it. O diſmal ſtate to lye dead in ſin! to be ſenſeleſs and unconcern'd under ſuch a load! But that's a life indeed, to be alive to God. And while this day of ſalvation continues, thou maiſt be queſtioned; but if this be loſt, the ſecond death will be thy portion, and then

Life

Life will be eternally farre from thee.

3. *This Word doth cleanſe thoſe defilements, which nothing in the world can do away.* *The Word of God* is compared to *fire*, and to *an hammer*; as *an hammer* it breaks the rocky heart, and then as *fire* it melts the heart, and from its droſs doth purifie it: *John* 15. 3. *Now are ye clean, through the Word which I have ſpoken to you.* In the *Word*, as in a *glaſs*, we may behold the abominable filthineſs, and vile ingratitude, that is in ſin; and alſo the *beauty of holineſs* is preſented to our eye; no wonder then, if the former be abhorr'd, the latter deſired. Beſides, the Word holds forth a Promiſe from the Lord himſelf, *to make the ſinner clean*, and that *from all filthineſs both of the fleſh and ſpirit*, *Ezek.* 36. 25. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. The Day of Grace is a day of healing; now thou mayſt be purged and cured of thy ſpiritual plagues; but if this ſeaſon be neglected, thou wilt dye of them.

5. *This Word doth afford ſuch peace and joy, as the creatures cannot yield.* Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, cannot yield ſuch

ſuch true comfort. Hark to *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 111. *Thy teſtimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoycing of my heart.* In ſenſual mirth the heart is ſad, miſgives, and is unſatiſfied; but the Word makes the very heart joyful. In the Word, we may ſee at preſent the reconciled face of God, the frowns and other ſigns of anger gone, and it ſpeaks plainly of fuller manifeſtations, and infinitely greater pleaſures, which are reſerved for hereafter, and the lively hopes of theſe, which are ſo near, as well as ſure and glorious, may well make the heart to leap for joy.

5. *This Word is able to build up thoſe who are converted, and to bring them ſafe unto their Country:* 'Tis a means to increaſe the grace, which 'tis a means to work: As it is *the incorruptible ſeed*, whereby we are regenerated and begotten again, ſo it is *the milk* wherewith we grow and thrive in holineſs. *Act.* 20. 32. *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.* I might add, That even thoſe whom the Word doth not ſaving'y

ſavingly change, yet it prevails upon many times a great way, it brings them near to the Kingdom, and 'tis their own fault that they miſs of it.

And ſeeing the Word of God hath ſuch effects, that the enjoyment of it is a great priviledge, is without controverſie.

2. Another priviledge of the Day of Grace, *is the preſence of the Spirit.* The Word, and all other Ordinances, without the Spirit, are but like the carcaſs without the ſoul. He makes the *Word quick and powerful, and ſharper then a two-edged Sword*, which alſo would be found but a dead and inefficacious letter. 'Tis obſerved concerning the hotter Climates, that when the Sun is up, and begins to ſhine, and ſcorch more vehemently, there is alſo a wind ariſes to fan and cool the dwellers there, elſe thoſe Regions would be uninhabitable. In like manner, where the Sun of the Goſpel ſhines, there is the wind of the Spirit; and theſe his gales, how refreſhing, how powerful are they? The acceſſes of the Spirit are much to be obſerved and eſteemed; without his concurrence, no

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advantage will be reaped by all the means of grace we uſe.

If the ſeveral operations of the Spirit are conſider'd, 'twill be very evident what a priviledge of the Day of Grace this is, to enjoy his preſence.

1. *'Tis the work of the Spirit to convince.* Though the ſecure ones of the world had rather be let alone to ſleep on, and cannot endure to be jogged by conviction; yet theſe convictions are great mercies. What the Spirit doth convince the world of, our Lord informs us, *John* 16. 8. *And when he is come, he will reprove or convince the world of ſin, of righteouſneſs and of judgment: of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me; of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the Father, and ye ſee me no more; of judgment, becauſe the Prince of this world is judged.* The Spirit convinces men of *ſin*; he ſhews the evil in it, and the danger of it, and among other ſins, that grand one of unbelief, that is to ſay, their rejecting Chriſt ſo long, and ſlighting and refuſing the remedy he proffers, is in a ſpecial manner ſet home upon their hearts to their affliction and humbling. He convinces

vinces likewiſe of *righteouſneſs* as well as of *ſin*. He diſcovers the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, whereby all ſin may be covered; and this righteouſneſs appears to be compleat and accepted, becauſe Chriſt is gone to his Father. Chriſt undertook by his ſufferings to ſatisfie for our offences; and if the ſatisfaction had not been full, he would never have been rid of the curſe, which, ſin being imputed to him, was laid upon him; neither would his righteous Father have ſuffered him to have ſit down in the Throne with him. But now ſince he is gone to his Father, and ſet down in the Throne, we may conclude, he hath paid the utmoſt farthing of our debt; and through him the Father is ready to ſhew grace and favour to us. And if the conviction and ſight of ſin caſt down, the diſcovery of this righteouſneſs may again revive. 'Tis a happineſs to ſee our ſcores, ſince we are ſhew'd a way how to have them all croſs'd; were it not for the ſight of the one, we ſhould never mind the other.

Again, the Spirit doth convince of *Judgment*. By *Judgment* we may underſtand, the condemnation of the impenitent

penitent and unbelieving, who, though they are convinced of ſin, continue in ſin; and though Chriſt be proffer'd, ſtill refuſe to embrace him. *The Prince of this world is judged*, and condemned; and ſhall theſe, who ſin againſt a remedy (which the Devil never did) eſcape? No certainly, *God, who ſpared not the Angels which ſinned, but caſt them down to hell, knows how to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed*, 2 *Pet.* 2 4, 9. Or elſe by *Judgment* we may underſtand, the Government and Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt. *All power is given to him*, and *Judgment committed into his hand. Satan, the Prince of this world, is already caſt out* and overcome. And if he *hath ſpoiled principalities and powers*, certainly *all his foes will he made his footſtool*. Well then, it highly concerns all to ſubmit unto the Scepter of Chriſt, ſince elſe they will be daſh'd in pieces by him. And in this Day of Grace, Chriſt is ready to paſs by former rebellions, if you now will become obedient to him

2. *'Tis the work of the Spirit to renew.* 'Tis a difficult matter to change an heart that

that is so unconceivably wicked as mans is; and yet the Spirit doth effect this change; he shews his mighty power, in causing a vehement love to be turned into a perfect hatred. Sin, which was lov'd better then the soul, better then salvation, the heart by the Spirit is turn'd against it, and how earnest are the cries that it may not reign, no, nor live any longer! And Holiness, against which there was a very strong, though unreasonable antipathy, is now hungred and thirsted after; there is a tide which runs upwards, contrary to the former stream which ran downward. The Lord hath those affections, which before sin and the world commanded. *The desart is become as Sharon*, and in the ruines which corruption hath made, there is a Temple for the Spirit of God to dwell in. The Day of Grace is the only time to be made new creatures in. Now thy earthly heart may be made heavenly, thy impure heart cleansed, thy mind, which was vain, carnal, enmity against God, may be made serious, and to approve, and subject it self to the Law of God.

3. *'Tis the work of the Spirit to guide.* They who are the children of God, are lead by him, and 'tis *in the way everlasting that he leads them*; they are directed into such a path, as will certainly bring them to the everlasting enjoyment of the Eternal God. Neither doth he only guide, but strengthen; the Spirit puts might into their inner man, and makes them to hold on their way, till they come to the blessed end of it. *We have all like sheep gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, Isa.*53.6. But in this Day of Grace, the Spirit is near, to chalk out a path, in which we cannot miss of happiness, and to help us over all the stumbling blocks, and difficulties which are cast in our way. The Spirit doth also comfort as well as strengthen. He sheds abroad the sense of the love of God into the heart; and such a joy issues from this sense of love, that tribulation cannot turn into sorrow.

4. *Many of them that perish, have experience, while this Day of Grace continues, of the Spirits workings.* The Spirit doth use a kind of holy violence, to hinder them from pulling down vengeance upon

upon themſelves. Thus he did ſtrive with the old world in the day of their viſitation. 1 *Pet.* 3. 18, 19, 20. *Chriſt was quickned by the Spirit, by which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon, which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long ſuffering of God waited in the dayes of Noah.* This place is wreſted, and may ſeem difficult, but the meaning is plainly this, That Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, by which Holy Ghoſt, accompanying the miniſtry of the ancient Patriarks, he preached unto the impenitent ſinners of the old world, whoſe ſpirits are now impriſoned in hell, becauſe in their life time they were diſobedient to the Spirits voice, all the while the long ſuffering of God did wait upon them. Thus the Spirit likewiſe did ſtrive with the children of *Iſrael, but they rebelled, and vexed the holy Spirit of God, Iſai* 63. 10. 'Tis not an unuſual thing, for the Spirit to enlighten and awaken the Conſcience, to clap chains and fetters upon corruption, for a while, that it breaks not forth as formerly, to constrain unto a frequent performance of

duty. But the Soul hankers after its beloved lusts and vanities, grows weary of the Spirits restraint, grudges the time and pains which duty takes up, and wishes that the Spirit would go away; and accordingly the Holy Ghost departs from him. However this is true, that the Spirit works much, and would more were he not resisted. That's the second priviledge of the Day of Grace, the presence of the Spirit.

3. Another priviledge of the Day of Grace, *is liberty to come to the Throne of Grace.* All flesh is now invited to the Hearer of Prayers, and their prayers shall be regarded, if they no longer regard iniquity.

1. *The Lord now is near, and may be found, Isai.* 55. 6. His merciful nature inclines him to come to the help of them that need it. As he is near to give them that grace which they cry for, so to give them grace to cry after a right manner. We cannot so much as come that we may be help'd, unless we are help'd to come. The Lord is within hearing of all that call; who ever sought him sincerely, and sought in vain? He is so nea

as to hear our very whisper'd supplications, and to take notice of the inward groanings of our spirits, *Psal.* 38. 9. *Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

But some may object, *Doth not the Scripture say, that the Lord and his salvation are far from the wicked? and therefore wicked ones have no encouragement to come to him.*

Well, But if the wicked man doth cry, that he may be renewed, and that his wickedness, both as to the guilt and practise, may be put far away from him, then the Lord will draw near immediately.

2. *God is not only in this day of grace willing to be found, but he seeks after us.* John 4. 23. *The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* Fervent prayer is delightful musick in his ears, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my Dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* The Lord is pleased to see us gather about him, and

to hear us cry for this, and that, and the other mercy, since his mercies are so great a multitude, that he hath enough and enough for all. Nay, the Lord himself doth seek to us, and *beseech us to be reconciled*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. And if he intreat us to accept of mercy, shall not we speed in our intreaties for the obtaining of it?

3. *The promise which God hath made may now be pleaded.* This is the time to lay hold upon his Covenant. *Lord! thou hast promised to blot out iniquity as a cloud; oh when shall this cloud be scattered, that I may walk in the light of thy countenance! Thou hast promised a new heart; when shall this heart of mine be changed! when shall it burn with love to thee, and indignation against sin, which doth offend thee! Lord! Thou hast promised to take away the heart of stone, and to transform the adamant into flesh; oh why am I so hard and stupid! why, since I have sinned so much, should I sorrow so little! Again, Thou hast promised to make me clean; Lord, when, oh when, will it once be!* Thus may we urge the Promises, and he that made them will

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give us cause to adore his faithfulneſs.

The worſt of men, *the chief of ſinners*, may urge the promiſe of a new heart, and of waſhing from filthineſs, as long as *they ſeek unto the God of Iſrael to do this for them*, Ezek. 36, 37. and are ſo far wrought upon, as to deſire to be ſanctified; the whole Covenant ſhall be made good to them, if their unbelief of Gods power and truth be not an hinderance.

4. *Now in this Day of Grace the great High-prieſt ſtands ready to intercede for us.* Never any ſincerely begg'd for pardon and for grace, but Chriſt pray'd that Prayer over again, and a gracious return was made to it. The Spirit alſo is ready to help infirmities, to fill our hearts with ſuch deſires as ſhall be ſurely ſatisfied; and truly we have to do with a God, who of the beſt things, which are moſt needful, moſt deſirable, is alwayes moſt liberal. Now are the *mollia fandi tempora*, the times to ſpeak and ſpeed; but when this gracious ſeaſon is gone, ah then the loudeſt cries will be in vain; God will hear, Chriſt will intercede, the Spirit help no more.

4. Another priviledge of the Day of Grace is this, *That now the way is open to the Kingdom.* As you may come to the Throne of Grace, so 'tis possible to get into the Throne of Glory, *Rev.* 3. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* Our Lord doth stand, as it were, with the Crown of Life in his hand, and saies, *Believe in me, and continue faithful to the death, and this Crown shall be put upon your heads.* The Kingdom is offered, and the sure way to the Kingdom is revealed: *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel*, that is, such a blessed and glorious life, as will never by death have a period; and if you *cease to do evil, learn to do well, and patiently continue in well-doing*, this eternal life shall assuredly be given you.

The foolish Virgins had a Day of Grace as well as the wise: The Bridegroom came, and the door was open; if they had been ready, they might have entered; but having lost the opportunity, they knocked at last, but it was too late, the door was shut, and they were sent away

away with, *I know you not*, Matth. 25. We read of *a Ladder that reached from earth to heaven*; now there is a possibility of climbing up thither: But there is no Ladder that reaches from hell to heaven: If this present day of salvation be lost, salvation it self also will be lost for ever.

5. Another priviledge of the Day of Grace is this, *That during this season the state of the wicked is not unalterable.* 'Tis true, the Holy Ghost expressly sayes, that impenitent and unbelieving ones are *condemn'd already*, *Joh.* 3. 18. Sentence of condemnation is past, but it may be repealed, if they at last are brought to mourn for their rejecting of a Saviour, and with their hearts *believe in the Name of the only begotten Son of God*; the consequent of this faith will be freedom from condemnation, *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* There was condemnation heretofore to them as well as to others, but now there is none, for they are in Christ, and shew it, by renouncing the lusts and works of the flesh, and

and giving themſelves up to the Spirits guidance.

They whom ſin hath ſet at a great diſtance from Chriſt, are called to come to him; and while this Day of Grace laſts, that word holds good, *I will in no wiſe caſt out.* But when this day is done, then 'twill be, *I will in no wiſe receive.* The Lamb himſelf then will be full of wrath, and that's dreadful. The Lamb can pacifie the anger of God, but who can appeaſe the Lambs anger? When the only Reconciler is himſelf irreconcileable; when the only Interceſſour is inexorable; when the only Saviour puniſheth with everlaſting deſtruction, what hope of help remains then?

But as yet 'tis poſſible for Rebels to obtain a pardon, and to be made children. Though thou haſt ſinn'd thy ſelf near to hell, yet thou haſt not ſinn'd thy ſelf into hell. Though ſin hath abounded, if thou art brought by the entring of the Law, to a ſence how thy offences have abounded, *Grace will much more abound*, Rom. 5. 20. The Lord hath turn'd and chang'd as bad as the worſt of you, and that which hath been done may be done again,

gain, ſince his hand is as mighty to ſave, and his Grace as free as ever.

I have done with the priviledges of this Day of Grace. In the third place follow the properties of it, which are theſe.

1. *This Day of Grace is uncertain, as to its duration*, 'tis more uncertain then the day of life, for that may end before this doth: Nay, the Day of Grace may be paſt, while the very means of Grace continue. The acceptable time was paſs'd with the *Jews*, when the Prophet was ſent to preach among them. Hark what a ſad Commiſſion he had, *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. *Go make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed.* 'Tis dreadful when the Word ſhall make the ear more deaf, and the Light the eye more blind; and awakening means the heart more groſs and ſtupid.

The Sons of *Eli* had outſtood their day, and yet after this their Father admoniſhes them, and endeavours to reclaim them. They were laſcivious, and

made

made themselves vile; and *Eli* said, *'Tis no good report I hear of you, my sons, ye make the Lords people to transgress: If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them.* When Drunkards, Sorcerers, Liars, Whoremongers, Worldlings, are reproved often, and will not hearken, who knows but the season of mercy may be ended, and the Lord intends to slay them, to damn them: And if at the hearing of this they are unconcern'd, there is greater cause to fear (though we cannot absolutely conclude) that 'tis so indeed.

The day of grace is uncertain: the means of grace may be before you are aware removed. The golden Candlestick doth not stand so fast in any place, as that 'tis impossible it should be took away. Tremble at that threatning uttered to the Church of *Ephesus*, Rev. 2. 5. *I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* And although Ordinances remain, a blessing

bleſſing may be withheld from them. Thou doeſt not know but every call may be the laſt time of asking, and Chriſt may for ever after hold his peace; and therefore preſently give conſent to be eſpouſed to him; thou doſt not know, but that every motion of the Spirit may have his laſt ſtriving with thee, and if thou ſtill reſiſteſt, the Spirit may take his leave, and ſay, *Fooliſh Soul, go on in ſin, go on to hell, I will not ſtrive any more to hinder thee.*

2. *This Day of Grace is exceeding precious*: This is the very flower and cream of time. What's the reaſon the *Pſalmiſt* begs, the Lord would *teach him to number his dayes aright? Pſal.*90.12. What's the reaſon one Apoſtle exhorts, *See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time?* Eph. 5.15,16. and another adviſes, *Paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear*, 1 Pet. 1. 17. Surely theſe holy men ſaw more in time, then moſt in the world are aware of; they were ſenſible, the preſent time contains the Day of Grace; and that eternal Glory muſt now be got, or loſt for ever. If there were no hope at all of being reconciled

conciled unto God, of obtaining mercy, and finding grace, alaſs our time would be of no value! But we may without prejudice to truth affirm, that time is more precious then gold; for now only Chriſt, who is ſo precious, is to be received; now only the Soul, which is ſo precious, is to be ſecured.

The Apoſtle calls this the *accepted time, and the day of ſalvation*: If now we come the Lord will accept us, and give his Son, himſelf, and freely all things to us; and Salvation, which ſince we are loſt we ſo much need, ſhall not be denied. This Salvation is called *Salvation of the Soul*, *Heb.* 10. 39. The better part, the Jewel which the Deſtroyer principally aims at, and deſigns to make his prey, is ſecured. This ſalvation alſo is affirmed to be *great, everlaſting, and ſalvation to the uttermoſt*. From the greateſt evils the heirs of ſalvation are delivered, everlaſtingly delivered, and that good work which is begun in them, ſhall be perfected to the uttermoſt, and all of them ſhall ſtand in Glory, as ſo many Monuments of Power, and Mercy, and Grace, unto Eternity. And is not the Day of Grace

precious,

precious, ſince a day of ſuch ſalvation?

3. *This Day of Grace is a Day of Power*, Pſal. 110. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* The Arm of the Lord is now revealed, in making the report of the Goſpel to be believed; the ſame power is exerted in raiſing a ſinner to the life of faith, that was ſhewn in raiſing up Jeſus our Lord from the dead. Strong holds are pull'd down, reaſonings againſt Religion, as if it were either abſurd, or intollerably burthenſom, are ſilenced. Thoſe luſts, which before bare all the ſway, have a deadly wound, which ſhall not be healed again. Sins dominion is overthrown, and the world is overcome, 'tis now under foot, which uſed to have its ſeat in the very heart. Thus believers find this day a day of power. They are powerfully drawn to Jeſus Chriſt, and as powerfully upheld and ſupported by him.

And of this power the ungodly are not without ſome taſte and experience. Mighty convictions and reſtraints for a while they have, but by degrees they grow ſtupid, and get looſe again, and then

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fulfil their fleshly and their worldly lusts with the greater eagerness; just as water being dam'd up, when that restraint is taken away, doth run with greater strength and speed for having been restrained.

4. *This Day of Grace it is but one, when this is gone, another is not to be expected.* In Nature there is a vicissitude of day and night, even at midnight 'twill not be many hours before the morning and the light return, *Soles occidere & redire possunt*; but the night which follows after the Day of Grace is everlasting. The abused light of the Gospel will be followed with that which is called, ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους εἰς αἰῶνα, *The blackness of darkness for ever.* Life indeed will return again at the general resurrection, but another season of mercy will not be vouchsafed. The Day of Grace is like the Dove, which *Noah* sent the third time out of the Ark, when once 'tis flown away, 'twill return no more. What mean the careless world to sport, and play, and sin away this golden season? Every moment that slips by you is irrevocable; and 'tis but a little while, and the whole stock will

will be ſpent of this accepted time: Oh improve ſome of it, at leaſt, before it be all gone.

If after death you were certain to be ſent into the world again, and to hear the joyful ſound of the Goſpel again, and that the Lord again would try you, and wait that he might be gracious, then preſent careleſsneſs were not altogether ſo much without apology. But ſince immediately upon your diſſolution, you muſt go to your long, your eternal home, either of weal or wo, oh let Eternity, which is juſt at the door, be provided for, before this your day be ended.

Thus you have the Properties of the Day of Grace. In the fourth place *I* am to lay down the Reaſons, why ſuch a Day of Grace is granted. Several reaſons of this may be aſſigned.

1. *One ſhall be drawn from the Son's Incarnation, and taking our nature on him.* Hence it comes to paſs, that unto man ſuch kindneſs is expreſſed. The Apoſtle ſayes, *Verily, he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him*

*the ſeed of Abraham, Heb.*2.16. He was made in the likeneſs of men, therefore mankind is the dearer to him. There is a difference put between apoſtate Angels and fallen men; I ſpeak even of thoſe, that through their own wickedneſs and folly miſs of ſalvation. The reprobate Angels never had a remedy provided, not a Day of Grace afforded; Chriſt aſſumed not their nature, but as ſoon as ever they had ſinned, they fell, like lightning, ſuddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, from Heaven to Hell. But man was not thus dealt with; even thoſe whom the Apoſtle calls *Veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction, are yet endured with much long-ſuffering, Rom.*9.22. Their ſalvation is in it ſelf really poſſible, I ſay, *in it ſelf*, though all things conſider'd, there is an impoſſibility of any other event, then the deſtruction of ſinners continuing in their rebellions; and this real poſſibility of ſalvation will make them caſt the whole blame of their perdition on themſelves, that the day of ſalvation was trifled away, and the ſalvation of that day was neglected.

This matter may be made more obvi-

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ous and plain by a ſimilitude. The Apoſtle *Paul*, *Acts* 27. admoniſheth the Centurion, who was to conduct him to *Rome*, that the voyage they were about to make, would be with much damage and hurt, not only of the lading and ſhip, but alſo of their lives. Who can deny, that the tarrying in the Haven where they were, and where they might have been in ſafeguard, was in it ſelf really poſſible? and they could not reaſonably lay the blame of their ſhipwrack on Gods decree and determination, but upon their own raſhneſs. In like manner ſinners are admoniſhed, that if they go on in wickedneſs 'twill be to their hurt and eternal damage, not only of their lives, but alſo of their ſouls. Who can deny, that the abſtaining from ſuch and ſuch ſins is really poſſible? therefore Gods decree is not to be blamed (which brings no coaction upon the will of man) but mans own perverſneſs, if he is wrack'd, and miſcarries to eternity.

We read of the *kindneſs and love of God our Saviour towards man appearing*, *Tit.* 3.4. The Son of God was manifeſted in the fleſh of man; and upon this

ſcore it is that light comes into the world, and ſhines even upon thoſe dark ſouls that are unwilling to comprehend it, and ſalvation is proffer'd alſo unto them that refuſe to embrace it.

2. A Day of Grace is granted, *that the power of God may be known.* His power is much ſpoken of in the Goſpel, and believers feel the wonderful effects of that power. We are inform'd of a twofold Creation, the firſt and the ſecond, the old and the new: In the firſt Creation, the power of God was glorious indeed, in making the world out of nothing; but here, as there was nothing to help, ſo there was nothing to reſiſt this power of God: But in the new Creation, in making new creatures, there is a great oppoſition and reſiſtance met withall, and how glorious is the power of God that overcomes it? What wonders are wrought in this day of Grace by the hand of the Lord? He not only ſayes, *Let there be light*, where darkneſs is, but where darkneſs is loved: He not only ſayes, *Ariſe*, to them that are dead, but to them that are unwilling to be raiſed. *Indiſpoſition* and *oppoſition* likewiſe are to be found in

ſinners

ſinners, when the Lord firſt comes to work upon them. The Bullock cannot endure the yoak, though hereby its life is lengthened; for the beaſt that works not is fatted immediately for the ſlaughter. A ſinner is likened *to a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoak*, *Jer.* 31.18. he diſcovers a great reluctancy and unwillingneſs to yield; now in turning ſuch an one (with whoſe corruption and luſts Satan joyns, to hinder converſion) the power of God is the more to be admired.

3. A Day of Grace is granted *for the manifeſtation of divine goodneſs and mercy.* The Lord is ſaid to *delight in mercy*, Mic. 7.18. therefore he allows a day, in which mercy may be had, and now it is to be obtained or never. It is not ſmall mercy that raiſes the ſons of men out of thoſe depths of miſery into which they are fallen: *Great is thy mercy towards me*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; and the greatneſs of it is demonſtrated, *for thou haſt redeemed my ſoul out of the loweſt hell.* And if the unworthineſs of man be duly conſidered, the freeneſs of this mercy is to be admired, as much as the abundance of it. Mer-

cy is free, as well as plenteous; 'tis expreſſed not only above deſert, but without deſert, nay contrary to deſert; therefore according to that ancient Fathers phraſe, 'tis *Omni modo gratuita*, free every way. Hence it is, that Saints have uſed that as an argument to obtain mercy, which one would have thought ſhould have quite diſcouraged them from entertaining any hopes of it, namely, *the greatneſs of ſin*, Pſal. 25. 11. *For thy Name ſake pardon my iniquity, for it is great*; as if he had ſaid, *Lord, I know 'tis thy deſign in this day of grace to manifeſt and to magnifie thy mercy; and the greatneſs of my ſin will ſerve to ſet thy mercy higher; the richneſs and freeneſs of it will be the more wondred at, becauſe ſhewn to a groſs tranſgreſſour.* Mercy, nay, πολὺ ἔλεος, abundant mercy is expreſſed in juſtifying the ungodly, in quickening the dead, and *begetting them again to a lively hope*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. And this is the only ſeaſon; if it be not now laid hold on, it will be clean gone for ever.

4. A Day of Grace is granted, *that the Lords long-ſuffering and forbearance may be wondred at.* He is an eye-witneſs

witneſs of all the wickedneſs that is done againſt him; he hates all the ſin he ſees, and can eaſily take vengeance upon the committers of it; he ſtands not in the leaſt need of any of them, and yet he ſpares them, and that a great while: Oh how great is the ſtock of his patience? *Lord! what is man that thou doeſt forbear him ſo long, ſince thou canſt ſo eaſily cruſh him! How comes it to paſs, that thou doeſt call after him to benefit him, ſince thou canſt not be benefited by him! and notwithſtanding many provocations art unwilling he ſhould periſh!* Oh wonderful patience, that will leave the abuſers of it without any the leaſt apology; and that will be matter of everlaſting marvel to thoſe, who hereby are lead unto repentance!

5. A Day of Grace is granted, *that the righteouſneſs of the Lord in thoſe ſeverities, which are ſhew'd upon the impenitent and unbelieving, may be the more evident and undeniable.* He will be juſtified when he ſpeaks, though never ſo amazing a ſentence be utter'd by him; *he will be clear when he is judged*: Sinners who had a day of Grace and loſt it,

an acknowledgment will be extorted from them, that they are justly punished, with the loss of endless blessedness, which they frequently heard of, and as often slighted.

When God shall thus plead with the Impenitent at his Bar; *Did not I give you a day as well as others? Did not I call, and you refuse? Did not I stretch forth my hand, and you disregarded me? Did not I give you counsels, and reproofs, and you set them all at naught?* And thereupon shall bid them depart away, never to see his face more: How will all the Saints and Angels approve of the Sentence, and cry, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, because thou hast thus judged!* and the impenitent will not have one syllable to say against it.

Now I descend to the Application: And I shall begin with some Consectaries, that may be drawn from the Doctrine.

1. *In this Day of Grace, to sleep is very improper. Let us not sleep, as do others,* (sayes the Apostle) *but let us watch, and be sober; for they that sleep, sleep in the night,*

night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night; but let us who are of the day be ſober, putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 6, 7, 8. How long wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggiſh Conſcience? when wilt thou awake? ſhall nothing force thine eyes open? The enemies of our ſalvation are far from ſleeping, they ply their buſineſs to bring about our ruine, and ſhall not we awake for our own ſecurity? How can we watch unleſs we are awake? and if we are not vigilant, how certain are we to be devoured by the roaring Lion? *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*; and light being given to ſee withall, *ſee that thou walk circumſpectly.* The Sun of Righteouſneſs is up, and ſhining, therefore we ſhould be up and doing. Sloth in this mid-day of the Goſpel is unſutable as well as dangerous; the Apoſtle therefore cautions againſt it, *Heb.* 6. 12. *That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.*

The Lethurgy of the Conſcience is a ſore malady; when the ſinners heart is ever

ever and anon ready to drop asleep, notwithstanding all the means which are used to rouze it. But though threatenings, though judgments will not awaken some, that are seized upon by the spirit of slumber, yet I'll tell you what will do it, The sight of an angry sin-revenging Judge upon the Tribunal; the seeing and feeling of the torments of Hell, will awaken them that are most fast asleep in sin: What wilt thou sleep upon the pits brink? Usually sinners fear least, when because of the nearness of evil they have most reason to be afraid.

2. *How much besides themselves are they, whose whole employment is the works of darkness in this day time.* The Apostle exhorts us, *to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light*, *Rom.* 13. 12. Light is a kind of armour, for the light making a discovery of sins deceitfulness, the heart is hereby arm'd against temptation; but because most do love their evil deeds, therefore they hate the light which doth discover and reprove them. Alas, that such bad work, as the service of Satan and divers lusts is, should have so many hands to it! The works

works of wickedneſs are rightly termed *the works of darkneſs*; the actors of them fly the light, for when they are ſeen they cauſe ſhame; and from God, who is light, they hinder us: allowance of theſe, and fellowſhip with him are inconſiſtent; moreover, unto *outer darkneſs* theſe works have a moſt certain tendency.

Now ſhall a Day of Grace be conſumed in ſins drudgery? This was given as a day of ſalvation, and ſhall we in it work out our own condemnation? Shall it be ſpent in making ſure of Hell, and *treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath*? When the Lord doth grant us a day to make our peace, ſhall we give this day to Satan, and do nothing, but by wicked works more alienate our ſelves, and make the wall of ſeparation higher? If the ſeaſon that was allotted for the obtaining of mercy be abuſed, only to the aggravating of ſin, and augmenting of miſery, this will argue you guilty of ſuch a folly and madneſs, as muſt be confeſs'd beyond hyperbole.

3. *What cauſe is there of thankfulneſs for ſuch a Day of Grace?* The Iſraelitiſh ſervants prized the year of Jubilee, and much

much more ſhould we this, *Ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν*, *acceptable year of the Lord.* Liberty and freedom from our ſpiritual bondage is now offer'd, and may be obtain'd, if you will not let ſin and Satan boar your ears, as it were; if you ſay not, as moſt do, *We love theſe maſters, and we will not leave them.* The greatneſs of our obligation to thankfulneſs for this Day of Grace, will be further evident, if theſe things are weighed.

1. *The light doth ſhine more clearly in this our day, then it did of old.* The ancient Jewiſh Church enjoyed but the dawning, or at moſt, the early morning of this Day of Grace, but we the noontide of it; many ſhadows of good things to come they had, whereby thoſe things were obſcurely repreſented; but we have under the Goſpel the ſubſtance exhibited, and the ſhadows are flown away. *Moſes*, the great Prophet of the *Jews*, had a vail upon his face, to ſignifie that his was a more dark diſpenſation; *but we all*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *with open face, beholding, as in a glaſs, the glory of God, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,*

Lord, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. Chriſt is now more fully diſcover'd, his ſweet offices more explain'd, and his precious benefits more glorioufly diſplayed.

2. *We ought to be thankful that this our day hath ſo long laſted.* The Lord long ago might have *given us up to a reprobate mind*, nay, fetter'd us in chains of darkneſs, becauſe of our hating knowledge, and *holding the truth in unrighteouſneſs*. 'Tis a wonder, that having ſinned ſo much againſt the light, we have not finn'd the light away. I read, that at *Joſhua*'s requeſt, *the Sun ſtood ſtill in the Firmament, and haſted not to go down for an whole day*, *Joſh.* 10.13. And have not we had experience of the like miracle of Grace? Hath not the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſtopt his courſe, not haſting to go down? How long hath Chriſt ſtood waiting? and ſtill he ſtands proffering both light and life, and light and life ſhall be given to them that underſtand the value of ſuch offers.

3. *Eſpecially we have cauſe to praiſe, if this Day of Grace hath been effectual, and we have been made the children of light, and of the day.* Moſt even in this Day of Grace

Grace, are blinded by *the God of this world*; the Gospel is to them an hidden Gospel; but if the *Lord, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts*, and hath *called us out of darkness into his marvellous light*, sure we have abundant reason *to shew forth his praises*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. If he had not enlightened our eyes, we should have slept the deep of death as well as others. Was there not a time, when we did not see either our sin, or our extream danger? Was there not a time when we were as unsensible of the worth of souls, and of our need of Jesus, as the most careless ones? Oh wonderful love, that he hath made the difference, and distinguished us from others! that hath illuminated and converted us, when others are suffer'd still to run on blindfold towards ruine!

4. Since such a day of Grace is granted, *the special seasons of it should be improved*: The whole is precious, but some seasons are more golden, and to be esteemed at an higher rate.

1. *The Season of Youth.* This is the fittest time to sow the seed of Grace, that it

it may bring forth the fruit of life and glory. The journey towards the new *Jeruſalem* is long, the diſtance which ſin hath ſet us at from our Creatour is great, therefore to be ſetting forth betimes is a great part of wiſdom: The Lord doth take it well, when in our youthful dayes we make choice of him. *Samuel*, *Obadiah*, *Joſiah*, *Timothy*, have a commendation given them, that they knew, and loved, and feared God betimes; that they abſtained from, and deſpiſed thoſe luſts and vanities, with which youth moſt commonly is enſnared and defiled. The time of youth is a time of ſtrength, vigour and activity; then you will either do much for God, or much againſt him. In the ſervice of ſuch a Maſter as the Lord is, how well will your ſtrength be employed? Activeneſs will here become you. Early remembrance of God will prevent abundance of ſin, which might cauſe bitterneſs many years after. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me*, ſayes *Job*, *and cauſeſt me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth*, *Job* 15. 26. and it will have great influence to your ſtedfaſtneſs with God all your dayes.

Quo ſemel eſt imbuta, recens, ſervabit odorem
Teſta diu.

Horat. Epiſt 2. ad Lollium.

The cask retains the ſcent of that a long time after, which was firſt put into it, when 'twas new. And in like manner, if youthful years are ſeaſon'd with grace, the *gray hairs will be found in the way of righteouſneſs:* Prov. 12. 6. *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* Add alſo, that in the time of youth ſin is more eaſily pluck'd up, becauſe it hath not taken ſuch deep root. Age and cuſtom will make evil, like the ſpots of the Leopard, and the blackneſs of the *Æthiopians*, which no water can waſh away. *Auguſtine* in his *Confeſſions*, *l*. 8. *c*. 5. doth make this acknowledgment, *Ex voluntate perversâ facta eſt libido, & dum ſervitur libidini facta eſt conſuetudo, & dum conſuetudini non reſiſtitur, facta eſt neceſſitas.* From a perverſe corrupted will flow evil deſires, while evil deſires are fulfilled, ſin ripens into cuſtom, while cuſtom is not reſiſted,

resisted, there follows a kind of necessity and unalterableness in sinning. Oh therefore withstand sin betimes; use the same policy in reference to your lusts, which the *Egyptians* would have used towards *Israel*; they feared lest the *Israelites*, when grown, might be too hard for them, therefore they endeavoured in their weak infancy to destroy them. To see young faces set towards *Sion*, the way thither being diligently enquired after; to behold children turn Souldiers in the spiritual warfare, fighting under Christs Ensign, making the Tempter flee from them, taking Heaven by storm and violence; what a brave sight is it!

2. *The Season of Health is another season to be improved.* Then the body is a more fit instrument to serve the soul in the Lords service. The time of sickness is most commonly a time of spending; therefore in health you should be treasuring up good store of Grace. Now you may attend upon the publick Ordinances, you may come to Gods House, and sit down at his Table; but sickness will deprive you of such opportunities. Now you should be labouring for Grace, and

trying your grace, that you may not be deceived with what is but counterfeit. You should be so wise, as to foresee the evil day of affliction and infirmity a coming, and beg beforehand for such a measure of faith as may make you stand, such a measure of patience and submission, that there may not be the least repining thought against God; but whatever your trials are, that you may not faint, but acquiesce in the wisdome and grace of him, by whom you are chastized. Beg also beforehand for a sense of his Love, and when you see the rod in your Fathers hand, none of the stripes will be intollerable. Let health be thus improved: And to perswade you, consider, that what you do in the day of health will be more upon choice, and not upon force, and consequently your sincerity will be the more evident; whereas if you are forced to seek the Lord by his smiting of you, whether your hearts are right, may be suspected.

3. *The Season of Spiritual Plenty should also be with care and diligence improved.* When heavenly Manna falls so thick about your habitations, shall none at all be

be gathered? When ſo much ſeed is ſown, ſhall the Fowls of the Air be ſuffered to take all away? or if you do receive this ſeed, ſhall it be choaked by the world, and bring forth no fruit to perfection? Let every one in this Aſſembly think thus with himſelf, *How many ſcores of Sermons have been preached to me? how many warnings have I had? how many reproofs have been given me? how often have I been exhorted to obedience? how many prayers have I joyned in? But what fruit have I to ſhew of all? What grace have I gotten? what luſt have I got the maſtery over? Where's the faith, the love, the zeal, the holineſs and humility, which might have been attained if theſe means of grace had been, as they ought to have been, improved?*

Ordinances in abundance are now enjoyed: ſhall they be but prices in the hands of fools? Where the Lord gives ſo much, to be ſure he will require the more. Oh lament your paſs'd non-proficiency, and for the future let your whole heart be in every duty; be moſt earneſtly deſirous to get ſomething from God every time you draw near to him. You neglect your

own interest, when you do his work negligently. Ordinances are the pipes through which grace is conveyed to thirsty souls; there is never a duty you engage in, wherein this truth should not be considered and believed. *In this duty God can give me that which is of greater worth then the whole world*; and hereupon you would not in Ordinances themselves, but obtain the benefit of them.

4. *The Lords day is another special Season of the Day of Grace*; let it not be prophaned, but husbanded to the best advantage. They who keep holy the Sabbath day, and find the Lord owning that sanctification of his day, by sanctifying and quickning, and refreshing their hearts upon it; as they are clearly convinced, so they are glad the Sabbath is moral, they would not it should be otherwise. 'Tis but reasonable they should give the Lord one day in seven; and no day is so much their own, so much for their spiritual, which is the truest gain, as this which they give to him: It may not only be called *the Lords day*, but *the Souls day* likewise. Worldly thoughts, and pleasures,

pleasures, and employments, which on other dayes are allowed, be now forbidden, that the Soul with greater intension may be respected, and provision made for it. Now Gods mouth is open, he speaks to us; his ear is open, we may speak to him; and if we hear and obey his voice, he will not fail to hear and grant our requests. The priviledge of enjoying Sabbaths, one of our English Poets doth no less piously then ingeniously set forth.

O day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next worlds bud;
Th' endorsment of supreme delight,
Writ by a friend, and with his bloud;
The couch of time, cares balm and bay;
The week were dark, but for thy light,
Thy torch doth shew the way.

Man had straight forward gone
To endless death; but thou dost pull,
And turn us round to look on one,
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not chuse but look on still;
Since there is no place so alone,
The which he doth not fill.

Sabbaths the Pillars are
On which Heavens Palace arched lies;
The other dayes fill up the spare
And hollow room with vanities:
They are the fruitful beds and borders
In Gods rich Garden; that is bare
Which parts their ranks and orders.

Thou art a day of mirth; (ground
And where the week dayes trail
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth;
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven
Till that we both being tost from earth
Fly hand in hand to heaven.

Herbert. Temple, *p.* 66. 67, 68.

5. *The feasting day is another season of* Grace. When *we are brought into the banquetting-house, and the banner over us is love,* Cant. 2.4. Where that Table is spread, where Christ is the Feast as well as the Inviter to it, there it is that believers may arrive unto such a nick of communion with the Lord that is nearest of kin to that fellowship, which perfect Spirits, which see him face to face, have with him. Oh what a relish hath the

flesh

flesh, which is meat indeed, that blood, which is drink indeed! *John 6.* When we behold how Christ hath suffered the curse for us, and upon this our faith concludes, from suffering it we shall be exempted; how may our hearts rejoyce? At this Table Christs Fulness is the entertainment. He beholds none with a grudging look, with an evil eye; the more hungry we are, the more welcome, and sure not to be sent away empty. Oh why will any feed on husks, and despise this *bread of God, which giveth light unto the world!*

Thus you see what are the special Seasons of the Day of Grace, which not to lay hold upon, is to be false to your selves, and regardless of your chief advantage.

USE. II. *Of Caution.*

There are three evils which I must warn you to beware of. First, *Presume not upon the lasting of this Day of Grace.* Secondly, *Don't rashly conclude the Day of Grace is pass'd.* Thirdly, *Take heed of being strengthned, and emboldened*

by the general practice to idle it away.

Presume not upon the lasting of the Day of Grace. Presumption is a sin as common, as unreasonable. How many thousands are now despairing in Hell because of the vain hopes, and false confidences which here on earth they entertained? 'Tis an ordinary delusion for the ungodly to imagine, that either they have believed and repented already, or that there will be time enough several years hence to do it; and after they have deferred their main work long, they are apt to defer it longer: *Tanquam semper victuri vivunt.* Sen. They live as if they were to live alwayes, and as if the Day of Grace were not a day, but a kind of eternity. 'Tis a notable passage of *Gregory Hom.* 12. *in Evang* If every one knew (saies he) when he were to go out of this present world, then he might more reasonably allot this part of his time for pleasure, and that for repentance. *Sed quia pœnitentiæ veniam spopondit, peccanti crastinum non promisit.* But he that promised pardon to them who repent of sin, hath not engaged to give another day to them

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that go on in ſin. Let two things here be laid to heart.

1. *Preſumption is the way to make the Day of Grace altogether unavailable.* Men will not ſeriouſly mind eternity, while they think they have time enough before them. Thou who reckoneſt upon many Sabbaths yet to come, and upon many Sermons yet to be heard, the preſent Sabbaths are loſt, and the preſent Sermons are little heeded, leſs practiſed, and thou thy ſelf leaſt of all profited.

2. *Preſumption is the way to ſhorten this Day of Grace, and to haſten the everlaſting nights approach.* The evil ſervant that ſaid in his heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming*, is threatned, *The Lord of that ſervant will come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of*, much ſooner then he was aware, *and cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, where there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*, Matth. 24. 48, 49, 50, 51. The rich man in the Goſpel preſumed upon many years, but he had not many hours of his time remaining; God called him *Fool*, and ſaid, *This night thy*

thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee. If an earthly Maſter bid his ſervant go and work to day, and he anſwer, he will ſet about his work a week, or a moneth hence; how can the Maſter chuſe but be provoked? he juſtly turns that ſervant out of doors, allowing him no longer time to tarry. The Lord, in like manner, bids the Sons of men to work to day; If they anſwer, Many years hence 'tis time enough; How can he chuſe but be incenſed, and his diſpleaſure may cauſe the ſeaſon of mercy to end ſuddenly.

Now that I may further ſtrike at and ſtartle this preſumption, I ſhall propoſe and anſwer one Caſe of Conſcience. *When have ſinners cauſe to fear that the Day of Grace is growing towards evening, and ready to conclude with them?*

To this I anſwer.

1. One ſign that the Day of Grace is near an end, is *long and unbewail'd unfruitfulneſs*: When they who have lived under the means of Grace, are either empty Vines, or bring forth fruit unto themſelves: when the Lord hath come, not three years only, but ten, twenty,

thirty

thirty years together, ſeeking fruit, but hath found none; and (which is worſt of all) their barrenneſs is not their burthen; 'Tis to be feared, that the axe will ſpeedily be laid to the root, that they will quickly be cut down, and be made fuel for that fire that is unquenchable. You have a notable Parable of a Vineyard planted in a very fruitful hill, *Iſa.* 5. *'Twas fenced, the ſtones were gathered out; but when grapes were expected, behold nothing but leaves, and wild grapes*, ver. 4. But upon this God reſolves *to take away the hedge, and his vineyard ſhall be eaten up, to break the wall, and it ſhall be trodden down; he reſolves to lay it waſte, it ſhall not be pruned nor digged, there ſhall come up briars and thorns, and the clouds are commanded to rain no rain upon it*, ver. 5, 6. You that have been long unfruitful, and this hath never troubled you, how ſoon may the clouds be commanded to rain no rain upon you? how ſoon may the influences of heaven be altogether withheld from you? how ſoon may barrenneſs be your puniſhment, which is your ſin, the Lord in judgment reſolving, that never fruit ſhall grow upon you?

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2. Another ſign that the Day of Grace is near an end, is *great ſecurity*. The old world were thus ſecure, when the Lord reſolved the Holy Ghoſt ſhould not much longer ſtrive with them. Great ſecurity was the forerunner of the *Jews* rejection. They would not believe their ſins were ſo heinous, or that God was ſo much diſpleaſed with them; they would not believe the Meſſiah, who told them of their maladies, and proffer'd to cure them. And the Apoſtle tells us, *becauſe of unbelief they were broken off*, Rom. 11. 20. And ſuch ſecurity will go before the end of the world, when the Day of Grace ſhall conclude with all, and when time it ſelf ſhall be no longer: How far are ſecure ſouls from being in a ſecure ſtate? *When they cry peace and ſafety, how ſuddenly may trouble and deſtruction come upon them, which they ſhall not eſcape?* 1 Theſ. 5. 3.

3. Another ſign that the Day of Grace is near an end, is *unlamented indifferency, whether or no it do continue*. If you are of an indifferent ſpirit, whether you enjoy the light, or it be put out in obſcurity; whether you hear the publi-

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liſhers of glad tidings, or whether their mouths be ſtopp'd; there is reaſon to be afraid the Lord is about to diveſt you of thoſe priviledges, which you know not how to value. If you look upon ſpiritual darkneſs, as no plague, which is infinitely worſe then that of *Egypt*; if you eſteem the famine of the Word (which is worſe then *a famine of bread*, or *a thirſt of water*, *Amos* 8. 11.) no ſuch great judgment, as long as from temporal judgments you are exempted, this is a moſt wretched temper of ſoul; and the Lord muſt needs be angry, when the greateſt mercies and favours are ſlighted; and what puniſhment more probable or equal then to be deprived of them?

4. Another ſign that the Day of Grace is near an end, is *contradicting and perſecuting of the Lords Meſſengers.* We read, *Matth.* 22. of a Marriage feaſt prepared, ſervants are ſent forth to invite many to the Marriage; ſome, who were invited, took thoſe ſervants and intreat them ſpightfully. Could the King, which made this Supper bear this? No, he was wroth, and did deſtroy theſe perſecutors,

ſecutors, and none of them were permitted to partake of thoſe good things he had provided, and once proffer'd to them. That is a dreadful text, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. *But they mocked the Meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, and there was no remedy.* The Apoſtles *Barnabas* and *Paul* preached the Goſpel, the multitude flock to hear them; when the *Jews* ſaw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ſpake againſt the Apoſtles doctrine; but the Apoſtles ſeeing them reject the Goſpel, and them, in ſuch a way, make this reply, *It was needful that the Word of God ſhould be firſt ſpoken unto you, but ſince you put it from you,* you ſhall not be troubled with it, *lo, we turn to the Gentiles,* Acts 13. 45, 46. and then to the *Gentiles* did the light ariſe and ſhine forth, and the *Jews* were left under darkneſs.

Another ſign the Day of Grace is near an end, if not quite ended, is *obſtinacy in ſome opinions, which are damnable.* When fundamental truths are denied, when all means uſed to reclaim and turn the erroneous,

roneous, through prejudice, do but confirm and harden them, how near to deſperate is their caſe? When the Lord ſends ſtrong deluſions to any, and they believe a lye, oh 'tis to be feared he intends their ruine, and that *their judgment will not linger*, will not ſlumber long: 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11, 12. *And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lye, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* Errour may extinguiſh the light of the Goſpel, and cauſe the Ordinances of God to be ſlighted, the Word to be caſt aſide, and the Spirit to depart, and leave ſinners to the ſeduction of Satan, and the imagination of their dark and fooliſh hearts. Let me therefore ſpeak to you in the words of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17. *Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know theſe things before, beware leſt ye alſo being lead away with the errour of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs.*

6. Another fatal ſign, that the Day of Grace is near its period, is *an habit of back-ſliding.* Hark how the Lord upbraids his people with this; and after,

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they are told of their desperate state, *Jer.* 8.4,5. *Thus saith the Lord, shall they fall and not arise? shall they turn away, and not return? why is this people of Jerusalem slidden back with a perpetual backsliding?* And then it follows, ver. 20, 21, 22 *The Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am black, astonishment hath taken hold upon me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no Physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?* There are many Professours, who sometimes look *Sion*-ward, and have some common work upon them, but after do draw back; and by often doing so contract such a searedness, that they make light of doing so. They do possibly under some awakenings confess their sins, but quickly return to the commission of them again; they are convinced 'tis their duty, and yet they will not be perswaded to do the work of the Lord vigorously, they are convinced of such and such sins, and yet they will not be dissuaded from vfollowing after them. They may have a *form of godliness*, but

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they will not be brought under the *power of godliness*, nor give their consent to be sincerely and thorowly sanctified. Divers motions and proffers of assistance they have had from the Spirit, but all in vain, they are bent upon backsliding. Surely then they have just ground to fear, that sentence is ready to be, if not already pronounced, *Ezek.* 24. 13. *Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.*

Thus concerning the Signs when the Day of Grace is declining and drawing towards night. Presumptuous soul, if thou findest in thy self any of these signs, oh startle exceedingly at the discovery, and before the last hour of the day be ended, enter into, and labour to purpose in the Lords Vineyard.

2. A second word of Caution is this, *Don't rashly conclude the Day of Grace is pass'd, and that the Sun is already set upon you.* This is an extreme contrary to that of presumptuous ones, which tempted and troubled spirits are very prone to run into. They are ready to take up *Jobs*

complaint, only with some sad variations, *Oh that I were as in moneths past, as in the dayes when God would have preserved me! when his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I might have been deliver'd from the power of darkness! The Almighty was then with me; he call'd upon me to turn, and was ready upon my turning to hear my calling to him. But now I cry, and he doth not hear me; I stand up, and he regards me not: I have so bitterly provoked him to leave me, that I am afraid he is now gone for ever.*

Three things are here to be consider'd.

1. *No man can certainly conclude concerning another, that his day is past.* If we consult the Scripture, we shall find those that have gone far in wickedness at last reclaimed; therefore we should not despair of the worst. Indeed the pride and stubbornness of the ungodly makes us fear that all our labour will be in vain, yet we speak still, *and exhort and reprove with all long-suffering*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. because with God all things are possible; and those sheep that are gone much astray, seemingly past reach, he can lay hold

hold of, and bring home again to the fold.

2. *No man ought to draw such a sad conclusion in reference to himself, that the season of mercy is quite expired.* Though our election may be made sure, yet reprobation is not presently to be discover'd: Though upon thy comparing thy heart and life with the Word of God, thou mayst know of a certainty thou hast no grace; yet thou hast no warrant to say, thou never shalt have any: As filthy as thou have been washed; as unholy as thou have been sanctified; as guilty as thou have been *justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 Cor. 6. 11.

3. *When Satan pesters you with thoughts, that there is no help remaining, but the acceptable time is all slipt away, rather hope the contrary*; for Satan is a liar; and because he is so busie about you, 'tis a sign that he is afraid of loosing you; if he knew certainly that your day of visitation were gone, he would be sure of you, and so he would be quiet, and not as he doth, molest and trouble you.

But for the further relief of those, who are apt to discourage themselves, and to damp their own endeavours after grace, by thinking the day is ended, and 'tis now too late, I shall do two things. First, *Lay down some probable signs.* Secondly, *Some certain signs of this Day of Grace's continuance.*

The *probable signs* of its continuance are these.

1. When the heart is inclined to sit under powerful means, who knows but by the word of faith which you attend upon, the grace of faith may be wrought in you.

2. When ever and anon the heart is stirred, and conscience awakened by the Spirit, and the Lord doth not let you alone in your iniquities, nor suffer you to sleep quietly and undisturbedly the sleep of death.

3. When those false grounds of hope which you have built upon, are more and more discover'd; when you are made to perceive the vanity of confidence in your selves, or in your own righteousness; and that 'tis not enough to be somewhat better then the worst are; and

that the name of Christians signifies nothing, unless you *depart from iniquity*, 2 *Tim.* 2.19. Who knows, but that being beaten off from insufficient bottoms, you may at length be settled upon the right foundation, Jesus Christ.

4. When there is a great fear least the Day of Grace should be past, 'tis to be hoped that 'tis not past. *Jerusalem* in the text was far from any such fear. Usually souls are left senseless, when the Lord leaves them. Of the old world, and of *Sodom* 'tis said, *They eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married and were given in marriage*, and minded nothing else but things of this nature, though the flood was so near the one, and fire ready to consume the other.

5. When sinners are inquisitive what they shall do to be saved, 'tis probable at least, that the day of salvation is not terminated, but salvation is near, and may be obtained, if the terms on which 'tis proffer'd are not quarrel'd at, but submitted to as good and equal.

In the second place follow the *certain signs* that the Day of Grace is not yet concluded.

1. *This day is not pass'd when the Soul is for peace with God upon any conditions.* If this be the yielding frame and temper of thy heart, certainly thou dost not only know, but also art willing to do the things which belong unto thy peace. If this be thy language, *Lord! Doth a right eye offend thee? it shall be pluckt out: doth a right hand offend thee? it shall be cut off: Those sins that seem most sweet and necessary, as long as thou hatest them, that is sufficient to discommend them, I am resolved to love them no longer!* Thou hast no reason to give up all for lost: No, no, being thus made willing to *cast away every transgression, iniquity shall not be thy ruine,* as you may see Ezek. 18. 30.

2. This Day of Grace is not pass'd, *when the sinner sets open the door of his heart that Christ the Lord may enter.* That promise is most sure, *If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he shall sup with me,* Rev. 3. 20. Christ complains of the *Jews* that *They would not come to him that they might have life*; but if any are made willing to come, the waters of life are open,

and

and none that deſire ſhall be denied them, *Rev.*22.17. *Let him that is a thirſt come, and whoever will, let him drink of the waters of life freely.* Doeſt thou know Chriſt? Art thou acquainted with his Kingdom as well as his Prieſthood? and art thou willing to have his Kingdom ſet up in thy heart, and thy very thoughts and affections brought into obedience and captivity? Art thou willing thus to receive him? Certainly thou ſhalt be received by him, and *have power to become a child of God*, Joh. 1.12.

3. This Day of Grace is not paſs'd, *if Grace be deſired above all things in the world.* If the edge of thy appetite towards the things that periſh is turn'd; if the pearl of price be indeed of price in thy eſteem; if that be thy will and deſire, which is *the will of God, even thy ſanctification*; ſurely the Spirit is ſo far from having left thee, that he is in thee: 'Tis he who raiſes this *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*, which as it *ſhall be ſatisfied*, ſo it argues thy eſtate bleſſed, *Matth.* 5.6.

5. This Day of Grace is not paſs'd, *when the heart is grieved for the*

miſpence of ſo much of this day, and is willing to live the reſt of it to the will of God, 1 *Pet.* 4. 2. If you judge that the time paſt of your life doth ſuffice, nay, more then ſuffice, to have been fooliſh and diſobedient to God, and to have obey'd and ſerved divers luſts and pleaſures, and if you reſolve to dedicate the remainder of your lives in the fleſh to the Lord, that he may diſpoſe of it, certainly the Lord will accept both of your time and you: Though you come in late, ſo it be but preſently, into the Vineyard, you ſhall receive a penny; and diligence in your Maſters work will be rewarded with your Maſters joy.

3. A third word of Caution is this, *Take heed of being ſtrengthned and emboldned by the general practiſe to idle the Day of Grace away.* We read concerning *Laiſh*, *That the people dwelt careleſs, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and ſecure*, *Judg.* 18.7. And truly this is the manner of moſt in the world, careful poſſibly they are about many things, but as to the main thing utterly careleſs: Their time is of little, and their ſouls of leſs value in their judgments. But that

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the humour and cuſtom of the world may not be followed, let theſe conſiderations be ponder'd by you.

1. *The moſt in the world are blind.* As *Moſes* ſpeaks, they are void of counſel, neither have they any underſtanding in them; *they are not wiſe to conſider their latter end, Deut.*32.28,29. nor the worth of that gracious ſeaſon, in which alone preparation can be made for it. And ſhall we write after the Coppies which a company of fools ſet us? Shall we follow the blind, that quickly will fall into the ditch, and have not eyes to ſee their danger?

2. *The moſt are unbelieving; a froward generation, children, in whom there is no faith*, and from this root of infidelity doth ſpring their prodigallity of the day of Grace. Did they indeed believe that death will not make an end of them, but that after this is finiſhed, another life will follow, either of the greateſt joy, or of as great ſorrow; and that joy or ſorrow in the next world will be their lot, according as the preſent ſeaſon is, or is not improved; certainly they would be more ſparing of that which is ſo precious.

ous. Oh the secret paganisme that is in the hearts of multitudes! they live as if Eternity were a fiction, and Hell a fable; but will it be thought a fable, when they feel the tortures of it? And what shall we tread in the steps of such Infidels? No, *we are to follow*, not the unbelief, but *the faith of others*, Heb. 13.7. *Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

3. *Are not many, who are such spendthrifts of this Day of Grace, self-condemned?* How often doth Conscience reproach them for their spiritual sloth? and 'tis very unreasonable to go in that way, which they themselves do frequently condemn themselves for: Idleness is is a sin which leaves behind it a great deal of regret and dissatisfaction in the heart; 'tis common for the slothful to hear a voice behind them, saying, *Time is a treasure that ought not to be thus foolishly, and to no purpose, wasted.*

USE III. *Of Exhortation.*

Let me perswade all to a serious improvement of this day of their gracious visitation.

visitation. The Arguments to prevail are these,

1. *This day is continually passing*: Your glass is running every moment, whether you sleep or wake, are in company or alone, are vain or serious, do pray or sin, it never stands still: And when once your glass is run, 'twill never be turn'd again, but taken down immediately. Your dayes are but an hand-breadth; and whether of this hand-breadth there be an inch remaining, is a question. *Time* is not unfitly *pictur'd with wings*, because it flies so fast away; and *bald behind*, because you cannot catch hold of it to pull it back. The best part of this day is usually at first; *if we seek unto the Almighty betimes*, *Job* 8.5. we are the more sure to find him; and this should engage you to a more speedy trading with this precious talent.

2. *You all must be reckoned with, how you have husbanded this gracious season.* Oh what a case will the slothful soul be in, when death gives him a summons; and he hears that word, *Render an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayst be no longer steward.* Conscience must needs very

very much amaze the ſinner, when it ſhall before the Judge bring in ſuch Indictments as theſe againſt him. *So much of this day of ſavation was ſpent in immoderate recreations: So much in carnal and ungodly company: So much in eager purſuing after the deceitful riches and pleaſures of this world: So much in making proviſion for the fleſh, that the vile and baſe luſts of it might be fulfilled: So much in proud and towring imaginations: So much in amorous and filthy muſings: So much in vain and rotten communication: So much in Taverns, and Ale-houſes, and in the Harlots habitations: So much in tricking and adorning the body: And Chriſt and the ſoul were all the mean while neglected and forgotten. Often ask thy ſelf this queſtion*; Do I ſpend my Day of Grace after ſuch a manner, as I may account for it at laſt with comfort? Such thoughts would make you ſerious.

3. *Let the diligence of the earthly minded, in improving the worlds day, ſhame you out of your idleneſs in this day of ſalvation.* If the greedy tradeſman hears of an excellent bargain, what madneſs doth

doth he count it to neglect the ſeaſon wherein he may have it? He that is covetous of preferment, 'tis no ſooner offer'd then accepted: Oh, ſay ſuch, *We muſt catch occaſion by the fore-lock, we may never have the like again.* Alas! that men ſhould be ſo wiſe in trifles, and ſuch fools in the greateſt matters! Now is the time of preferment; you may be advanced to the dignity of Children, and Heirs of God: Now is the time to grow rich towards God, to lay up ſuch a treaſure, that will never fail, that none can take away from you.

4. Let the apprehenſions which others have of this Day of Grace be conſider'd by you. Here I ſhall bring ſeveral Speakers upon the Stage, delivering what their judgments and thoughts are.

1. Hearken to the awakened Soul, whoſe eyes are newly forced open by the Spirit: *Surely I am more brutiſh then any; I have not the underſtanding of a man: Many years I have liv'd, and as many I have loſt, in ſin and folly: A treaſure I have been entruſted with, but I have been cheated of it by a deceitful heart, a deceitful world, and a ſubtle Serpent: I remember*

ber opportunities have followed thick one upon another, of getting grace, but none were laid hold upon: There was nothing I slighted more, then that which least of all deserv'd my slighting: Oh that my past dayes could be again recall'd, they should be spent after another fashion: But instead of that, what cause have I to fear, that the Lord may allow no more time, since that which he hath allowed hath been so unprofitably consumed?

2. Hearken to the serious Christian: *How great a work have I to do, and how short a time to do it in? How vast is eternity, which depends upon this moment? Lord! the world is not worth my time and pains in comparison of thy self, and that Grace and Glory which thou hast revealed. Now is the time to fly from the vengeance of eternal fire, and to gain the life that's everlasting; and to scape the one, and gain the other, shall be my lifes main business.*

3. Hearken to a rouzed sinner just going out of the world: *Oh! my head doth ake, my heart is sick, my eyes are dim, my breath is short, a general trembling seises on me, and all do shew, that this earthly house*

house of my tabernacle is upon the point of being dissolved: And must I now be forced away? O my soul, to what place art thou removing? Hark! I hear a dreadful sound within; Conscience speaks language full of horrour. Alas! Is the sentence now past, Cut down the tree that brought forth none but evil fruit? Must I go presently to the Bar of God, who have nothing but provoked him all my dayes? May I not be spared a few years, or moneths, or weeks longer? Oh call time again; I never saw thy worth till now: If I might be again recover'd and restored, oh how often would I pray, and how earnestly would I cry for mercy and grace? how carefully would I hear and practise? But this I should have done before, 'tis now too late to think ——— and there he stops, his thread is cut asunder, his soul flyes away, and leaves his body a clod of earth.

And now Brethren, are your hearts still mastered? 'Tis to be hoped concerning the worst in this Congregation, that their day is not quite gone; but who knows whether this may not be the last hour; and if now you will not, your own spirits may be quickly required of you,

you, or Gods Spirit may depart from you. You will wish at last, as others have done, that the day of salvation had been valued, let it therefore be no more neglected.

5. Consider, *If you will not improve the Day of Grace, you can reasonably expect nothing but a day of wrath.* When mercy hath acted its part towards ungodly ones, and being still refused, makes its *Exit*; then fury and indignation enters upon the stage; but of that tragedy there will be no end. Whole eternity will be taken up in feeling the effects of divine displeasure, and in bewailing the loss of that Day of Grace, wherein this anger might have been appeased.

I have done with the second Doctrine.

Doct. 3. The third follows: *To know, in this Day of Grace, the things which belong to our peace, is our great happiness and wisdom.* If *Jerusalem* had been thus wise, she would not have been, as she was, rejected. *If thou hadst known,* sayes Christ: The defective speech is thus to be made up, If the things of thy

peace

peace had been understood by thee, O *Jerusalem*, thy state would have been as happy as now 'tis woful: instead of being cut off, thou wouldst have been still as near to God and as dear as ever; instead of having his wrath poured out upon thee to the uttermost, that mercy, which hath been so often proffer'd, had assuredly been bestowed, if thou hadst not foolishly shut thy eyes, so as not to see either the value, or thy own need of mercy. A text somewhat parallel to this we have *Isai.* 48. 17, 18. *Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way which thou shouldest go: Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the Sea.*

In the prosecution of this Doctrine, I shall first open to you the nature of peace: Secondly, manifest what are the things which belong to our peace: Thirdly, confirm the doctrine: Fourthly, apply it.

In the first place I am to open to you the nature of peace.

This is a ſubject no leſs profitable then pleaſant, *Dulce nomen pacis*, the name of peace hath a ſweet ſound. *Peace* implies a bleſſed conjunction between heaven and earth, between the Creator and us his creatures; and, which follows hereupon, a ſatisfaction and quietneſs in our hearts, ſo that thoſe diſturbances and diſorders, which were cauſed by ſin, are becalmed and regulated. The firſt of theſe, namely, Agreement with Heaven, is the principally intended peace, which Chriſt ſpeaks of; but the other, namely, Quietneſs within, follows upon this, and is the ſuperſtructure upon this foundation:

I ſhall therefore firſt explain the nature of *Peace above*, and afterwards of *Peace within*.

1. *There is a Peace with God above*; When I ſpeak of peace with God, 'tis ſuppoſed that by nature God and we are at variance, and ſin is the make-bate between God and man. Sin is a thing that not only cauſes commotions and tumults here below; therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *From whence comes war and fightings among you? comes it not hence, even of*

your lusts that war in your members? *Jam.* 4. 1. but it also sets Heaven and Earth at odds; it so besots the potsherds of the earth, that they venture to contend with him that is their Maker, and who can easily dash them all in pieces. Sin hath set us at a vast distance from God, and is continually thrusting us further from him; yet we may have peace, if we will indeed return to him: Though we have provoked him to be an enemy, yet he is not such an enemy as is irreconcileable: Hark what language he utters, *Isai.* 27. 4, 5. *Fury is not in me; let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* Peace with God is here promised; God himself is ready to strengthen us, that we may make peace with him, and the more abundantly to encourage us, he sayes, *Fury is not in me*, that is, towards them who are willing to be reconciled, and to rebel no more, he is not at all furious, but gracious and easie to be intreated, though their awakened and fearful hearts are prone to imagine the Lord is made up all of anger.

This Peace with God, ſeveral things are implied in it.

1. Peace with God implies *the removal of his wrath.* All ſin is pardoned and done away in the bloud of Chriſt, and guilt being cover'd, the Lords anger ceaſes, for ſin is the only provocation to him. See how theſe are joyned, the forgiveneſs of ſin, and the taking away of wrath, *Pſal.* 85.2,3. *Thou haſt forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou haſt covered all their ſin, Selah. Thou haſt taken away all thy wrath, thou haſt turned thy ſelf from the fierceneſs of thine anger.* The flaming ſword is removed, and the Lord ſayes, *Draw nigh to me, and I will draw nigh to you.* We read, as of a Gulph fixed between God and damned ſpirits, ſo of a middle wall of partition between God and unregenerate ſinners; the former, namely, the Gulph, indeed cannot be paſſed thorow; but the latter, the middle wall, may be broken down, and 'tis broken down when our peace is made: His wrath abides on thoſe that will not believe, that refuſe to be reconciled; but his anger ceaſes towards them who believe and yield to him. Thrice happy they,

they, who are eased of such a load as the wrath of God!

Speak O ye troubled Consciences, is not this anger your greatest trouble, and that which makes the deepest wounds? Speak, O Hells Inhabitants, is not divine wrath a punishment too heavy for you to bear? is not this the weight which sinks you lowest in the bottomless pit? Finally, hear what Christ spake when he felt the displeasure of his Father, *My Soul*, says he, *is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Well may they rejoyce, who through Jesus are freed from this displeasure.

2. Peace with God implies *an interest in his love.* His love is every whit as great towards those who are at peace with him, as before his wrath was. We may cease to be angry with another, and yet not have any great affection for him. But where the Lord turns away his wrath, the stream of his love doth run amain. The time of our reconcilation and returning is called *a time of love*: And this love is the more to be admired, because it finds us in our bloud, which makes us deserve loathing; it finds no

beauty, no comelineſs at all in us, but what it puts upon us. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of *rich mercy*, and *great love*, which the reconciled have an intereſt in, *Epheſ.* 2.4,5. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt: by grace ye are ſaved.* This love of God is exceeding liberal, it ſets open his fulneſs which is ſo all-ſufficient, and we may come, and take what we need at pleaſure.

And as they, who are at peace with God, have an intereſt in his love, ſo this love doth enkindle love in them to him again: The unreaſonable enmity of their hearts againſt God is cured; the ſoul lifts up it ſelf to God, *Pſal.* 25.1. which before very unreaſonably doated upon the world, and much more unreaſonably upon its own luſts.

3. Peace with God implies *the eſtabliſhment of a ſure and everlaſting Covenant between him and us.* As the Lord makes this Covenant, ſo he makes over himſelf in this Covenant; He becomes ours, and he takes us for his own, *Ezek.* 16 8. *Now when I paſſed by thee, and looked*

looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I ſware unto thee, and entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine. This Covenant is ſtyled *the Covenant of peace.* The Lord being once a friend will never become an enemy; he will be merciful to the unrighteouſneſs of them that are in Covenant with him; and as he hath engaged not to leave and forſake them, ſo he hath promiſed to put his love and fear into their hearts, that they ſhall not leave and forſake him: they are apt to be unſtedfaſt, 'tis well they have to do with a God that is faithful and changeth not; to this is owing their perſeverance and their bleſſedneſs. That's a ſweet place, *Iſai.* 54.10. *For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither the Covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* Oh that our hearts were but ſet to ſtudy this Covenant of our God! How precious, how ſutable are the Promiſes of it! We are guilty, defiled, troubled, weak and loſt creatures, but in this Covenant, Pardon,

the Spirit, Peace, ſtrengthening Grace, and eternal Salvation are made over. And he that hath promiſed can as eaſily perform as promiſe. Nay, Chriſt hath confirmed this Covenant by his death, ſo that it cannot be altered. Our Lord at his death engaged his Father to be a Friend unto all that did or ſhould believe in him; and therefore that he will be a ſure and never failing Friend, may ſecurely be built upon.

4. Peace with God implies, *his taking us into a new and near relation to himſelf.* He makes us his Children, and ſurely then we ſhall abide in his houſe for ever. He not only ſayes I will be *a God to you*, but alſo, *I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. Well may we wonder with the Apoſtle, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God!* Thoſe who are at peace with God are eſpouſed unto Jeſus Chriſt, unto ſuch, a Bill of divorce ſhall never be given. And as Chriſt becomes their Husband, and God their Father, ſo they conſent to carry it like Children,

dren, to love and fear the Lord in a child-like manner, to follow fully and hard after him; they are willing to be faithful unto Christ, and to be subject unto his commands, which are far from being grievous.

5. Peace with God implies *freedom of acceß to him.* Thoſe who proudly harden themſelves in ſin, the Lord beholds them afar off, but he is nigh to thoſe whoſe peace is made; ſuch are invited not only to come, *but to come with boldneß to the Throne of Grace*; and mercy and grace to help ſhall not be denied them, *Heb.* 4. *ult.* They may without diſcouragement approach to God, and tell him of their temptations; He is ready to ſuccour them: they may tell him of their weakneſs, he is ready to ſtrengthen them with might in their inward man; they may tell him of the diſtempers, which they are burthen'd with, he is ready to heal them; they may ſpread their deſires before him, he is ready to fulfil the deſire of the humble, *Pſal.* 10, 17. *Lord, thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear.*

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And as the Soul, whose peace is made hath freedom of access to God, so God hath freedom of access unto the soul. When Christ knocks, the heart opens; when the Spirit moves, he doth prevail; when God comes to dwell, the heart yields it self to be his Temple and habitation; and how much hereby is the soul dignified and advanced? The sinner is no longer foolishly stubborn, he denies the Lord nothing; when he requires his heart, his desire, his love, none of these shall be kept back any longer from him.

6. Peace with God *implies fellowship and communion with him.* There is a kind of a *commonness* between God and them that are reconciled to him; whatever is in God is theirs, because *God is not ashamed to be called their God*, Heb. 11. 16. They have an interest and propriety in his Power, and Wisdom, and Mercy, and fulness, and they are sensible of the blessed effects of these and other of the Lords Attributes. God having given them himself, what will he refuse to communicate? He is ever manifesting himself, and bestowing those blessings upon them,

them, which Aliens never do receive. He deals not towards them with a ſparing hand; the promiſe runs thus, *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*, Pſal. 81. 10. And this is certain, that the more open our mouths are, the more open will the hand of God be.

Thus you ſee what Peace above, what Peace with God is.

In the next place I am to ſpeak of Peace within.

'Tis natural to man to be his own enemy and tormentor. He that was poſſeſſed with unclean ſpirits, 'tis ſaid no man could bind him, no not with chains, but he was in the Tombs and Mountains, crying and cutting himſelf with ſtones, *Mar.* 5. 5. In like manner, a child of diſobedience, in whom the Prince of the power of the Air worketh, will not be bound, will not be hindred from doing his ſoul harm; thoſe cords of reſtraint that the Word caſts upon him, he breaks aſunder and caſts away; he is continually cutting and wounding his own conſcience, and if he be not quickly tranſlated out of this eſtate, he will quickly give himſelf the fatal blow. As long as any

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are enemies to God, they are alſo their own adverſaries; but when they leave off fighting againſt God, they ceaſe warring againſt themſelves.

Peace within is very comprehenſive, ſeveral things are therein included.

1. Peace within comprehends *calmneſs in the Conſcience*: This calmneſs follows upon the apprehenſion and ſenſe of our peace with God, and that now he is in his Son reconciled. A reproaching Conſcience is a fearful companion; we cannot fly away from Conſcience, it is alwayes with us; if awakened 'twill ſpeak boldly, and tell us our own, be we never ſo proud or high in the world, and the ear is forced to hear Conſcience's accuſations; when God gives it a command to ſpeak, how impoſſible is it for us to impoſe ſilence on it? Oh what a ſtorm doth the remembrance of manifold ſins, with their manifold aggravations, raiſe in the Conſcience? how amazed is it to ſee ſo much guilt, and God ſo much and ſo juſtly incenſed? But when God by his Spirit doth ſay, *Soul, though ſin hath abounded, my grace doth ſuperabound; thy debts are all paid, thy iniqui-*

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ties are all pardoned, Then the ſtorm ceaſes, and there follows a great calm; Then Conſcience layes aſide the whip of ſteel, wherewith before it laſh'd it ſelf.

Conſcience acquits the ſinner, becauſe God hath firſt juſtified and abſolved him. Sins which are paſt are remitted, and inſtead of continuing in ſin, the heart is changed, and is ſincerely deſirous to have it ſlain; and this godly ſincerity Conſcience gives teſtimony to, the effect of which is peace and joy, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience.* Conſcience tells us of our duty, and urges us to the performance of it; now when Conſcience is heeded by us, and what we do for God our very hearts are in it, Conſcience will not condemn, but approve us, and this will quiet us; for ſayes the Apoſtle, 1 *Joh.* 3.20. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

2. Peace within comprehends *ſatisfaction in the heart. Solomon*, while making trial what ſufficiency was in the things under the Sun, was far from peace within, vanity was the fruit of all his labour,

labour, and his spirit is so far from being satisfied, that 'twas filled with vexation. But when God doth give himself to us, whom our hearts must then needs look upon as a proportionable happiness, as a sufficient portion, oh then we are come to our centre, and are at rest. When the Soul ceases to tire and weary it self in pursuing after the creatures, and is fixed upon God, who is a Sun, a Shield, an exceeding great Reward; who is the God of all grace, and calls us to eternal glory; who cannot only satiate our desires, but do exceedingly above our desires and thoughts, according to that power which worketh in us, *Ephes.* 3. 20. Then, then our peace abounds, and passes all understanding. The heart is exceedingly pleased with its choice, having made choice of God; it would not exchange conditions with the greatest graceless ones in the whole world.

It must be acknowledg'd indeed, that in this life only the back parts of the Lord *Jehovah* are seen, and little of him in comparison is to be enjoyed: Yet this is certain, that *Gods little* is much more then the *worlds all*: The enjoyment

ment of the Lord in part, affords more peace and satisfaction, by ten thousand degrees, then the creatures are capable of yielding; and that satisfaction, how much is it heightned by the assured hopes, that at last we shall be fully satisfied?

3. Peace within comprehends *an agreement in our wills to the will of God.* Tis but reason, that since Gods will is so high, so holy, so good, our wills should stoop and submit; and we cannot have peace but in that submission. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and refuses to be subject to the Law and Word of God: Nay, by that very Law the corrupted heart is irritated and provoked, 'tis the more forward to sin, because forbidden to transgress: He was not unacquainted with mans nature, who said,

Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusq; negata.

We are very prone to do that which is forbidden, and to desire what is denied us: And while the heart is thus irritated by the Law, alas! the sinner is like the troubled

troubled sea, when it cannot rest: *Sin taking occasion by the commandment, doth work all manner of concupiscence*, Rom. 7.8. But now what peace is there, when our hearts are reconciled to our duty, when we do not quarrel at, but love the Law, and wish, oh that our wayes were directed to keep it! How can there be peace within, unless there be some suitableness between our spirits and Gods Word and Ordinances? unless what was before look'd upon, without cause, as a burthen and wearinesse, be now esteem'd as a priviledge and advantage?

Peace within comprehends *ordinateness in the affections.* Our passions and affections, being corrupted by sin, are very tumultuous and unruly; and except these are tamed and brought into right order, we shall not know peace. Those are some of the worst kind of slaves that are enslaved by their own affections. How is that man hurried, who is under the power of worldly or unclean desires? His fleshly and his worldly lusts do so take up his time and pains, that they will not permit him to eat, or drink, or sleep,

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and much leſs pray in quiet. How is that heart rent and torn, that is by inordinate love glued to any creature, when of that creature 'tis deprived? Oh the overwhleming ſorrow which follows upon love that is exceſſive! What a rack and torture is anger? What an evil is fear? many times worſe then the evil feared: And ſo I might inſtance in other affections.

If the world be compared to a Stage, and the life of man to a part which he acts upon it, we may truly ſay, that a wicked man doth act, Ἑαυτοτιμωρούμενον, the part of a *Self-puniſher*, becauſe by giving way to his corrupt affections, he contributes ſo much to his own diſquiet.

But 'tis the work of the Spirit of God to renew theſe affections; the anger and ſorrow are turned againſt and on ſin, the love and the deſire are towards God: And as here there is no danger of exceſs, ſo there is a certainty of enjoyment: The heart ſits looſe from the world, and the world is not able to diſturb that peace which it hath in God. None are more free from trouble then thoſe that are

moſt maſters of their own affections; And well may the Apoſtle ſay, that *the fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy*, Gal. 5.22. ſince he brings our affections into captivity.

5. Peace within comprehends *a ceaſing to be our own foes.* When are we our own foes? Surely when we ſide with Satan againſt our ſelves, when we cheriſh thoſe luſts that war againſt our own ſouls. The Vipers off-ſpring do eat out the Vipers bowels; and ſinful luſts, in like manner, will deſtroy at laſt thoſe in whom they are bred and foſter'd. Oh let us all be reconciled to our ſelves, and not continue any longer the greateſt acceſſories to our own miſery.

I have ſhewed now what Peace is.

In the ſecond place I am to manifeſt what are the things which belong unto our peace.

'Tis in the Goſpel that theſe things are revealed, which therefore is called the Goſpel of Peace, *Rom.* 10.15. *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* Herein is contained an Embaſſage of reconciliation: The God of

of peace proclaims to the world what an inclination he hath to be a friend and a Saviour to the children of men, and informs them upon what articles a peace shall be made and established between him and them. The Law of Nature is here silent; the Heathens by the light of that could never find out the way, how Divine Justice may be satisfied, and an attonement for sin made. Nay, the written Law of God speaks not a word concerning it: The Law teacheth our duty, convinceth of transgression, thunders out curses against transgressours, and they would be left under the curse, if the Gospel did not tell them how to be redeemed from it, and how Grace, and Mercy, and Peace may be obtained.

There are three things which the Gospel reveals concerning our peace.

1. *Who is the Mediatour or Peace-maker, Jesus Christ.*

2. *What are the conditions of this Peace.*

3. *How we may attain to an assurance of it.*

1. One thing which we must know concerning our peace, is, *Who is the Me-*

diatour or Peace-maker between God and men, and he is Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. *For there is one God, and one Mediatour between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* Here it was that *Jerusalem* was ignorant; a crucified *Messiah* (though his crucifixion was necessary to his making of our peace) they hid their faces from, and disesteemed. Christ crucified was to the *Jews* a stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* foolishness, but to them that are reconciled and saved, he is the power of God, and the wisdom of God: Hence 'tis, that the Apostle resolves to know nothing besides him. All things that are revealed in Scripture must be known with relation to Christ, else our knowledge will be uncomfortable and without advantage.

What good will it do us to hear that God is gracious and merciful, unless in Christ he be reconciled? what good, to be informed of heaven and glory, unless Christ, who hath the Key of *David*, do open the door that we may enter? What good, to hear of the Promises, unless in Christ they be Yea and Amen to the glo-

ty of God? Finally, what will it benefit us to hear of the priviledges of the Gospel, unless through Christ we are admitted to them? There is an excellency in the knowledge of Christ our Peace-maker, in comparison of which the Apostle counted all things but loss and dung, *Phil.* 3. 8.

Christ Jesus is our Peace-maker by a threefold means. His *Satisfaction*, his *Intercession*, and *the communication of his benefits*.

1. Christ Jesus is our Peace maker by *means of his satisfaction*: For the iniquity of his people was he smitten, and the chastisement of their peace was laid upon him: He was sent on purpose to be a propitiation; 1 *John* 4. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* Christ is said to reconcile both *Jews* and *Gentiles* unto God, by the bloud of his Cross, and to have slain the enmity thereby. Corruptible things, as silver and gold, were insufficient, but the bloud of Christ was a sufficient price for our redemption.

We may conceive such a kind of dia-

logue as this, between Justice, and Christ, and Man who hath offended.

1. Divine Justice thus begins: *Bring forth the Soul which hath sinned that it may dye; A righteous Law hath been broken, and 'tis but righteous that the curse should be inflicted: Here are not one, or two, but thousands of sins upon record: Now therefore I am resolved to whet my glittering sword, and my hand shall immediately take hold on vengeance, and I'll make the sinner know to his cost, what 'tis to provoke the Lord to jealousie.*

2. Christ answers; *Hold Justice, stay thy hand! those sins thou speakest of, they are transferred unto another, therefore the Soul must not dye that's guilty of them: The debt is great, but I undertake to pay it all; where thou art wronged, it shall be put wholly on my account, I am resolved to be the sinners Surety, I am content to be made sin for him, though I knew none, though I never was my self in the least guilty.*

3. Unto this Justice replyes, *Then, O thou Son of God, I must sheath my sword in thy bowels, I must wound, and bruise, and afflict thee; where ever I find sin, though*

but

but imputed, I *can't forbear to punish it.*

4. Christ answers again; *Do Justice, strike, and spare not; I am willing to be wounded, that the sinners wounds may be closed and cured; I am willing to dye that he may live; I am willing to undergo the curse, that he may receive the blessing, even life for evermore.*

5. Upon this the sinner wonders and cryes out, *Oh love that passeth knowledge! My Lord, my Saviour! since thou hast given thy life a ransom for me, I am resolved to trust in thee, and to lay the stress of my salvation on thee; I expect and desire favour and pardon no other way, then by thee, who art both the Price and the Prince of Peace.*

2. Christ is our Peace-maker *by means of his intercession.* As his satisfaction is one, so his intercession is the other part of his Priestly office. He seconds his sufferings by his intercession; and we may be confident his intercession will be prevalent, because of that love which his Father bears him, and because by his sufferings he hath purchased whatever he intercedes for. *Christ the righteous is our*

Advocate with the Father, 1 John 2. 1. He preſents before his Father the compleatneſs of his ſatisfaction, and how he hath endured the Croſs and ſhame, and drank off that whole Cup which his Father put into his hand, and fulfilled all righteouſneſs; how he did, and ſuffered all that was required of him, and all this, not for himſelf, but us. Whereupon the Father looks upon us with an eye of love, he is pacified towards us; and as he is Chriſts God and Father, ſo he is ours too: *John* 20. 17. *Go tell my brethren, I aſcend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

Chriſt is our Peace-maker *by the communication of his benefits*: He is made unto us wiſdom, and then we ſee the way of reconciliation: He is made unto us righteouſneſs; ſin is no longer imputed, and that quarrel which Juſtice had with us comes to an end: He is made unto us ſanctification; and then the holineſs of God ceaſes to be our enemy, and we no longer hate that holineſs; there is a ſweet agreement between our renewed nature and an holy God, and his holy Law, which he would have us walk according

cording to. They that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, love God becauſe of his holineſs, and they love the Word of God upon the ſame ſcore, *Pſal.* 119.139,140. *My zeal hath conſumed me, becauſe mine enemies have forgotten thy words: Thy Word is very pure, therefore thy ſervant loveth it.* Finally, Chriſt is made unto us redemption, that's a fourth benefit reckoned up by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 1.30. He makes us free indeed, becauſe he frees us from that which is ſlavery indeed, he delivers us from the bondage of corruption, and cauſes us to become the ſervants of God and righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 6. And now we are reconciled to Gods Soveraignty and Authority, we own him as our Lord, who as he hath right to rule us, ſo 'tis our honour, our advancement, our freedom to be ruled by him.

2. As we muſt know who is our Peace-maker, ſo what are the conditions of our peace.

1. One condition is *godly ſorrow*: And as the Lord doth grant us peace, ſo he himſelf doth work this and the other conditions of it. If we will be reconciled, we muſt mourn for our offending and

and provoking God to be an enemy. The eye of the body can look every way but inward, and shall the eye of our mind never look inward neither? Were our hearts but more acquainted with themselves, they would be more broken and contrite hearts: How deeply is the Law of sin engraven there? and this Law of sin forbids whatever the Law of God commands, and commands whatever the Law of God forbids. The most venemous creature is not more full of poyson, then our hearts are full of enmity against the Lord, and reprobateness to what is good: This corruption of our nature is not a thing which hath layn dormant and idle; no, but as a Fountain perpetually sends forth water, so from the heart proceed evils abundantly, whereby the man is defiled. 'Tis difficult to reckon up the sins of one day, or of one duty; and how vast then is the total sum of our whole lives abominations? Oh break hard heart for shame! who hast so often broken the most equal laws, and broken thorow so many obligations to obedience. If thy offending God be made light of, this will anger him more then all thy other offences.

2. Ano-

2. Another condition of our Peace is *Believing*. When the Jaylour was under the ſenſe of Gods anger and wrath, and tortur'd with the fears of damnation, and cry'd out, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Paul* and *Silas* made this anſwer, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, Acts* 16.30,31. How much is faith preached up in the Goſpel? and unto Chriſt our faith is directed, for 'tis in him that God is well pleaſed, and 'tis through that beloved Son alone, that he will be at peace, and well pleaſed with us: If we expect favour or mercy any other way, but through Jeſus, that very expectation is ſufficient to be an eternal impediment to our obtaining of either. The Lord hath made Faith one great condition of our peace and ſalvation, for two reaſons.

1. Man being thus reconciled and ſaved by believing, *all the glory redounds to God alone*: Mans boaſting is utterly excluded: The hand of faith is an empty hand, it brings nothing along with it; but it receives Chriſt, *and with him, and from him, freely all things*. Faith exalts Chriſt, and abaſes the ſinner, and makes him

him ſee, that he is wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and naked, and that to Chriſt he muſt be beholding for every thing, he muſt thank himſelf for nothing.

Man being thus reconciled and ſaved by believing, his peace with God is laſting, his ſalvation ſure, *Rom.* 4. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promiſe might be ſure.* *Adam* was at peace with God when firſt created; but ſince the continuance of his peace depended upon the conſtancy of his obedience, peace and life were ſoon loſt by him. But faith puts our peace and ſalvation in the hands of another, in the hands of Chriſt, he undertakes to be *the finiſher of our faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He hath promiſed to keep us from falling, and *to confirm us to the end*, 1 Cor. 1. 8. And the believer reſts upon this word of promiſe, which will never fail him.

That's the ſecond condition of peace, believing.

3. Another condition is, *Converſion with the whole heart to God.* How often doth the Spirit cry out, *Turn and live?*

And

And though the Lord was bitterly provoked, yet upon his peoples returning, he promiſes to be pacified, *Jer.* 3. 12. *Go and proclaim theſe words towards the North, and ſay, Return thou back-ſliding Iſrael, ſaith the Lord, and I will not cauſe my anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.* Our returning to him muſt be without delay, without deceit; we muſt not divide our hearts between him and ſin, between him and Mammon, but we muſt conſent to be *wholly his*, and never to leave him any more; but if through infirmity we do fall, we muſt look unto the Lord to pity, and pardon, and heal, and raiſe us. To turn away from God ſo as not to return, is inconſiſtent with peace. Thus you know theſe things, which are the conditions of your peace; let me add, *Happy are ye if ye do them.*

3. It concerns us to know, *how we may attain to an aſſurance of Peace.* The ſoul indeed may be ſafe without this aſſurance, but withall 'twill be diſconſolate. Now 'tis the Spirit who makes this diſcovery: We read, *Rom.* 14. 17. *of peace and joy in the holy Ghoſt.* Peace and

and joy are the fruits of this blessed Comforter. In Scripture the Saints are said to be *sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption*, *Ephes.* 4.30. And their being thus sealed, as it denotes their distinction from the rest of the world, their being appropriated unto God, and the value that is put upon them; so it serves to confirm them in that perswasion, That God is theirs, and they are his. There is indeed a privy Seal of his gracious Decree, of which the Apostle speaks, 2 *Tim.* 2.19. *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* But afterwards, when the Spirit works upon us, we are sealed in a more discernable way. Now the work and method of the Spirit in sealing and bringing those, who are reconciled, unto an assurance of peace, I shall declare.

1. The Spirit convinces us of sin and misery, of our worthlesness and weakness, and bows our hearts to a submission to the righteousness of Christ, and draws us to a closure with him.

2. The Spirit sanctifies and cleanses us from the filthiness, in which we wallowed,

lowed, and causes us to yield obedience to the commands of God, *Ezek.* 36.27.

3. The Spirit doth more and more stir up and increase the grace which he he hath wrought, so that the actings of faith, and love, and hope, and zeal, are the more strong and sensible.

4. The Spirit doth discover the truth of these graces, letting us see, that our hearts do prize Christ, and breath after God, and after a greater degree of likeness to him, as the Saints in Scripture have done before us.

5. Then peace and joy follows. But here we must understand, that this peace is twofold. First, more weak, mixed and imperfect. Secondly, more ravishing, glorious and triumphant.

1. There is a peace *more weak, mixed and imperfect*, which is for our support and encouragement, and this is common with believers, when they stir up themselves, and seek the Lord with their whole desire, as they did, 2 *Chron.* 15.15. Seldom is a duty performed with our heart and might, but some degree of peace and satisfaction follows, the Spirit giving some intimation, and raising a secret

cret hope, that God through Christ doth accept of us. Oh who would not labour since there is such peace, and rest attends it?

2. There is a peace *more ravishing, glorious, and triumphing.* How brightly doth the light of Gods countenance then shine upon us! How sweet is that love, the sense of which the Spirit sheds abroad in the heart! *Rom.* 5.5. What confidence have we then in God! How do we admire the richness of his grace! how low are we in our own eyes, being astonished that such vile creatures should be so advanced! How do we then despise the worlds delights, and the pleasures of sin! How forward are we to obey, and to walk in all Ordinances blameless! How undaunted at danger, and at death, which will but increase our pleasures, sending us much nearer to the Lord, then here we are capable of approaching! Thus 'tis by the Spirit that peace is spoken to us; and if we would attain to this peace, we must heed the Spirits counsels, we must readily close with his motions, we must gladly accept of his help and assistance, we must give up our selves unto his guidance. In

In the third place follow the reasons of the Doctrine.

Why, to know the things of our peace is our great happiness and wisdom.

The reasons are these.

1. Because *a true knowledge of these things will be practical and industrious*; It will very much affect the heart, and quicken diligence, in seeking peace before it be too late: A right understanding of it, will hinder a business of such eternal consequence, from being any longer neglected by us.

2. Because *of the evil which unavoidably follows, if of the things which concern our peace we are ignorant.* The ignorant soul is wretchedly careless, it matters not whether God be a friend or foe; if his loving kindness were not to be valued; as if his wrath were not to be feared; and at last, the soul misses of mercy, which it doth not regard, and falls suddenly and irrecoverably into the pit of destruction, which it dreams not of, or endeavours to prevent.

Now follows the Application.

USE I. *Of Instruction.*

There are two great lessons which we may learn from this Doctrine.

1. One lesson is this, *That believers are the wisest and happiest souls, for the things of their peace are understood by them.* Those things which are hid from the prudent of the world are unto these discovered. I know they are accounted children and babes by the carnally minded, but in the end they will be found to have had above all others the greatest foresight, the truest reach, the truest understanding. *Matth.* 11. 25, 26. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

Peace is a thing which all seek after, but most are mistaken in judging what is peace, and are wofully deceived in the way to it: Only the believer hits right, for he is lead by a Guide that leads only into truth.

'Tis indeed found by experience, that

endeavours are used to blind and deceive the believer himself; but he is too wise to be put off with peace and happiness only in shew.

Many things do proffer peace to him.

1. Pleasures do use this charming language. *What is it, O man, which thou seekest for? Is it quiet and satisfaction? Come taste the sweetness which gratifying thy senses will afford: Is it not fine to gritter in silk and silver bravely? to be clothed in purple and fine linnen, and to fare sumptuously and deliciously every day? Who are more free from care and trouble, then those who chaunt to the sound of the viol, who drink wine in bowls, who eat lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the midst of the stall, and after lay them down upon beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches? Come, come, away with needless scruples, indulge unto thy appetite, please thy senses, whatever thy eys desire withhold not from them, and quench thy longing flame in* Dalilah's *embraces.*

Unto this the believing soul replyes: *Death is climbing up at the windows, the Judge standeth before the door, Eternity is*

just at hand; and, O all ye sensual plea-sures, can you last any longer then a short season? Where is the Glutton that fared deliciously, that had as much as heart could wish? Is he not tormented in the flames? Oh deceitful pleasures, which cheat men of eternal joys, and drill them along to endless torments!

2. Wealth and worldly greatness do also make big offers: *Wouldst thou, O Man, have peace? then seek a great estate, joyn house to house, and field to field, let thy coffers be cram'd with silver and gold, endeavour to be somebody in the world: Dost thou not know how many eyes, how much respect riches and honour will draw after thee? Let this be thy aim, to live in plenty and esteem, and to leave a name behind thee.*

Unto this also the believing soul answers: *To expect peace and contentation from worldly abundance, is as absurd, as to hope to sleep quietly in a bed of thorns. Who ever attained to greater earthly glory then* Solomon? *whose treasures did ever more abound? yet he himself disgraces all his own wealth and honour, by calling them, Vanity and vexation of spirit.*

3. At

3. At last the Lord calls to the Believer, and thus speaks to him: *Is it happiness, O man, which thou art searching after? Look unto me, who am the God of love and peace: The creatures have but empty breasts, are but broken cisterns; but I have store of living waters to quench thy thirst, and satisfie thy longing: Sin is the disturber of thy peace, therefore let sin be cast away with hatred, and trouble, that ever thou didst give it entertainment. Come, come to me without delay, I will be to thee a God, I will be all unto thee; thou shalt never lack as long as I am all-sufficient.*

Hereupon the soul yields: *Thou art my haven, O my God; till I am arrived at thee I am in a storm, and every moment in danger to be cast away; in thee only, through thy Son, I can have peace; oh therefore let me be glew'd to thee, that nothing may cause a separation!* well may the believing soul return unto its rest, since God is his, and the peace which is made shall never quite be broken.

2. Another lesson which we may learn is this, *The wretchedness of the ungodly, for there is no peace to them*; Isai. 57.21. *There is no peace, saith my God, unto the*

wicked. And the more wicked, the less peace, and the longer you continue wicked, the less hopes that ever there will be any. I grant indeed, that 'tis ordinary for wicked ones to cry peace to themselves, but this false and imaginary peace is as bad, nay worse, then none at all.

1. The peace of the wicked *is founded upon ignorance*; they know not what cause they have to fear and be troubled, the sins which they commit, the God whom they every hour provoke, and the vengeance unto which they are liable, is not in all their thoughts; *These things they are willingly ignorant of*, 2 Pet. 3. 5.

2. This peace of the wicked, *many times 'tis the consequent of judicial hardness*, their eyes are shut, their consciences are cast into a dead sleep, and are become past feeling; no wonder if they enjoy a kind of quiet.

3. This peace of the wicked *is a great hindrance to their obtaining of true peace*; while they imagine their state is good and safe enough, they will not seek to have it alter'd; by means of this the strong man armed doth keep the house in more quiet and secure possession.

4. This

4. This peace of the wicked *is but of very short continuance*; 'tis chased away like a pleasant dream or night vision, and the succeeding wo and trouble will be the more intollerable, because unlookt for it will come upon them.

A peace the wicked have, but 'tis without ground, and worse then none: True peace what have they to do with, as long as the wickednesses, which are practised, delighted in, and pleaded for, are so many?

1. *The ungodly have no peace in life.* The Lord is their enemy, he hates them, is angry with them, walks contrary to them. Hark how he proclaims war, Ezek. 5. 8. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I even am against thee, and I will execute judgments in the midst of thee.* And as the Apostle sayes, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* So the words may be inverted, If God be against us, what doth it signifie who is for us?

2. *Much less have the ungodly any peace at death. The end of the perfect and upright is peace, but the transgressours shall be destroyed together, the end of the wicked*

shall be cut off, Psal. 37.37,38 Then their hopes will prove a Spiders web, their confidence as the giving up of the ghost. Perhaps when the snares of death are upon them, the pains of hell may get hold of them, Conscience may be affrighted, and they may be like wild Bulls in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, and the rebuke of God; But if they dye stupid, there is the less hope; if there are no bands in their death, 'tis the more certain they will be bound immediately after, and thrown into the lake of fire.

3. *The Judge will not find the ungodly in peace*: No, no, they were not diligent or desirous to be cleansed from their spots and filthiness. How many sins unrepented of will accompany them to the Tribunal? which will prove them enemies to God, and which with a lowd united voice will cry for vengeance upon them.

4. *And will they find any peace in hell, into which with a curse they must depart?* Can there be any ease, any rest taken in those devouring flames? How many things will the damned have to trouble them?

them? All the wrath of God stirr'd up against them: The glory of his power manifesting it self in their destruction: The reflections of Conscience upon the proffers of peace and life, which were once made, but madly, sottishly despised, and which should never, never be made more: Oh how will they be troubled, and bowed down, and mourn, and wail, and weep eternally!

USE II.

Of Exhortation to the Lords Enemies.

O that you would be perswaded unto peace! Many arguments I may fill my mouth with, to prevail with you to be reconciled.

1. Do but consider seriously, *what kind of enemy the Lord is*, and that consideration will make you afraid, that he should be your enemy any longer.

1. *You cannot fly from his reach.* Though you exalt your selves as the Eagle, though you set your nest among the Stars, yet from thence the Lord can bring you down, *Obad.* 4. Though you should go down to the bottom of the Sea, and hide

hide your ſelves at the earths centre, yet there his hand can take you. If you imagine that any refuge can ſecure you from God, that refuge will be found a lye, and will deceive you. The Lord does fill both heaven and earth, nay the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him, how then is it poſſible any ſhould fly from him?

2. *You cannot reſiſt his power.* Far ſtronger creatures then you, were not able to withſtand the God of heaven: The Dragon fought and his Angels, but how eaſily were they overcome? After that *Jehu* had ſlain *Joram* and *Ahaziah*, the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, we read that the Elders of *Samaria* *were exceedingly afraid, and ſaid, behold two Kings ſtood not before him, how then ſhall we ſtand?* 2 *Kings* 10. 4. So may I ſay, Behold the Angels that excel in ſtrength, ſtood not before the Lord, he caſt them, when they ſinned, into chains, which they can never break aſunder; And how then ſhall man be able to ſtand, who dwelleth in a houſe of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt, and who is cruſhed before the moth? Sinner! God will certainly be too hard for thee, thou canſt

no more reſiſt his power, then a feather can bear up againſt a whirlwind, or dried ſtubble defend it ſelf from the fierceſt flame.

3. *You cannot bear his indignation.* How doth *David* faint and cry out, when a little of Gods anger was ſtirred up againſt him? *Remove thy ſtroak away from me, I am conſumed by the blow of thy hand, Pſal.* 39. 10. And if a little be ſo intollerable, what will the whole weight be? The Prophet brings in the unſenſible creatures as if they had ſenſe, fearing and quaking, when the Lord doth ſhew his wrath, *Nahum* 1. 5, 6. *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his preſence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein; who can ſtand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceneſs of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.* Surely that heart is worſe then rocky, which doth not tremble before him.

4. *He can engage all the creatures againſt you.* He is the Maker and alſo the great Commander of the Hoſt of Heaven and Earth. The Angels are ready

dy preſs'd for his ſervice, and to do his will; all the Devils are at his beck, and forward to be the Executioners, when he hath paſs'd an angry ſentence: The Thunder and the Lightning ſay unto him, *Here we are*: The ſtormy Wind doth fulfill his words: Nay, the ſmalleſt and moſt inconſiderable creatures he can render dreadful, and tame the proudeſt by them. And ſince he is *Jehova Exercituum*, the Lord of ſuch Armies, Oh do not enter into battel with him.

5. *He hath acceſs unto your very ſpirits, and can wound and fill your ſouls with horrour.* When the Lord impreſſed his anger upon the heart of *Judas*, how reſtleſs was he? though a covetous man, he flings away his ſilver, *that* would not eaſe him; his life is a burthen, and with his own hands he puts an end to it. *A wounded ſpirit who can bear?* and wounds *there* the Lord can give you.

6. *His power will reach his enemies in the next world*: Nay, then his hand will be heavieſt of all; God will lay on load upon his adverſaries, and not in the leaſt ſpare them: His patience will then be at an end, his goodneſs totally and eternally with-

withdrawn; and how low then will his vengeance weigh them down? Such an enemy the Lord is, and this is one argument to perswade you to peace.

2. *Be mindful of the dependance you have upon him.* In him you live, and move, and have your being, and if he should withdraw his visitation, your life would presently conclude and vanish: And is it safe, or a wise part in you, to provoke that God to be your enemy, in whose hand your breath is, and who can take it out of your nostrils when he pleaseth? He can loose the silver cord, he can break the golden bowl, and require your souls at your hands, without giving you an hours or a minutes warning. Whosoever you fall out with, methinks you should get and keep in with God, for 'tis his patience and mercy which keeps you out of the grave and hell; of both which, by reason of sin, you are in great danger.

3. *The condescension and stooping of God is admirably great, in beseeching such as you to be reconciled:* And shall he intreat in vain? Shall the malefactour be beseeched to accept of a pardon, and refuse

rule it? That is a text that should work upon the most refractory, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *Now then we are Embassadours for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* What is it come to this, that God beseeches, and Christ pray, that we, who are so mean and so vile, would be friends, and shall we continue rebels? *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!* for the impenitence, then the earth or stones, are much more stupid. To slight the proffer of mercy, and to disobey the command to come for it, is bold a fault and a folly inexcusable; but to be deaf to intreaties, is worst of all; it goes nearest unto God, when his condescension and kindness is disregarded and abused, and upon this abuse the greatest contempt, and anger, and hatred must needs follow.

4. *Consider what kind of friend the Lord is.* I might be large in describing his excellencies, which they who are acquainted with him see and admire. Three things at present I shall mention.

1. God is such a friend, *whose love is transcendent.* That sweet name (which

is

is as an ointment poured forth) he calls himself by, *The God of love and peace*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. Nay, he is stiled *Love*, *Love* in the abstract, 1 *John* 4. 8. *He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.* Whatever returns of love we make, those returns fall infinitely short of the love of God from whence they come. Indeed it is as possible to equal him in strength, in wisdom, or any other of his perfections, as to equal him in love. Oh let this love of God be as a loadstone to draw yours, and as a whetstone to sharpen it.

2. God is such a friend, *whose fulness can never be exhausted.* The Sun, although it hath shined ever since the Creation, yet 'tis as full of light as ever it was. And though the Lord hath supplyed the wants of all them, whom he hath made his friends from the beginning, yet his stock and store is not at all diminished; His wisdom is never posed in their greatest difficulties; when believers know not what to do, and their eyes are unto him, he knows what to do for them: His power can raise them out of the lowest deep, his all-sufficiency can give

to

to the uttermoſt of their deſires, nay exceedingly more then it hath entred into their hearts to deſire or conceive: Who in his wits would not leave a vain world, and deceitful luſts, to come to ſuch a friend as God hath alwayes ſhewed himſelf to be?

3. God is ſuch a friend, *as will laſt when all other friends faſl.* He is the Lord who changes not: He can as ſoon ceaſe to be, as ceaſe to be faithful; and the faithfulneſs of God towards his friends, will make them alſo faithful; he will not turn away from them, and he will hold them faſt that they ſhall not depart from him. The Lord is moſt conſtant; the Ordinances of the Sun, and Moon, and Stars are not ſo immutable as the Promiſes he hath made. *Men of low degree are vanity, men of high degree are a lye, Pſal.* 62. 9. But God is true: Wealth may take wings and fly away, proſperity may vaniſh ſo as to be forgotten, fleſh and heart may fail, but the Lord will be a friend and a portion for ever. Oh conſent to be reconciled, ſince ſuch a friend hereby will be gained.

5. Conſider, *If God be at peace with you,*

you, he will ſhield you from all other adverſaries; he will wreſt thoſe weapons out of your own hands, whereby you endeavoured your own deſtruction; he will give a deaths wound to ſin, that it ſhall not be your death. And though the world, and the God of the world, fight againſt you, they ſhall not be able to prevail: Nay, their very enmity ſhall befriend you, *and God will turn to good what they do mean for evil.* 'Tis admirable to conſider, how the adverſaries of the Lords people, though they have the *intenſion* of enemies, yet are forced to *act* like friends, and do a kindneſs unto Saints by thoſe means, whereby they thought to have injured and deſtroyed them. Juſt as *Joſeph*'s brethren, when they would hinder his promotion, ſold their brother into *Egypt*, where he arrived to that honour, which being foretold was the matter of their envy.

6 *Gods late diſpenſations, in a way of judgment, do call upon you aloud to ſue for peace.* He hath diſplayed his Flag of Defiance, and the Motto of it hath been, *Peſte, Ferro, & Flammâ*, *By Plague, and Sword, and Fire*; By all theſe the Lord

hath been fighting with us and our ſins, and rebelling againſt him is the ground of the quarrel. The Sword was drawn, which devoured fleſh, and dyed red the Sea with bloud. The Quiver was open-ed, and out flew the Arrows of the Peſti-lence; and what ſlaughter did thoſe Ar-rows make? Heaps upon heaps the De-ſtroyer kill'd, many thouſand went down to the Chambers of Death. We were ready to conclude, when the Plague was over, that God had done with us, but we were miſtaken: A Fire was kindled in his wrath, which the ſtrongeſt, the ſtate-lieſt buildings could not ſtand againſt: How did the flames roar? what havoc did they make? In three dayes ſpace *London* was no more like it ſelf, then the dead bones, which have lay'n in the grave for ſeveral years, are like unto the man when he was alive, and in his greateſt ſtrength and beauty.

When theſe effects of his diſpleaſure are look'd upon with a conſiderate eye, who can doubt that God was angry? and how little hath been done to appeaſe his wrath? 'Tis high time to beg for mercy, and to abandon whatever is a bar

in Mercy's way. Oh that *London*, oh that *England*, would know the things that belong to their peace! We are not brought so low but we may be brought lower, if we provoke the Lord to continue still an enemy.

7. Consider, *as yet there is a possibility of being reconciled to God*: His Arms are open and stretched forth, if you will but cast your selves into them: If the most wicked will but forsake their wayes and thoughts, and return to the Lord, he will have mercy upon them; and though sin hath abounded, he will abundantly pardon, *Isai.* 55. 7. Oh what would the damned give, that mercy were but possible to be obtained? 'Tis great mercy that you have not sinn'd your selves beyond the reach of mercy: But if the favour of God and peace with him be neglected, how quickly may you be concluded under sin and wrath, and your salvation become as impossible, as is the salvation of those who are in Hell?

I hope by this time your ears will be readily open to hearken to some Directions, how you may have your peace with God made.

The Directions are these.

1. *Be sensible of, and bewail that enmity which is between God and you.* You have unnaturally rebelled and risen up against your Father that made you. Those members which he formed, you have yielded as weapons of unrighteousnes; those powers which he hath indued your souls with, you have employed sinfully: You have dishonoured him in your bodies and spirits, whereas you should have glorified him in both. You are unjustly and unreasonably the Lords enemies; what hath he done to deserve your hatred? for which of his kindnesses do you fight against him? But the Lord is justly an enemy to you, because your transgressions against him have been so many and so mighty. That you should have hearts alienated from such a God, so holy and gracious, and to whom you owe all that you are and have, it should make your hearts break and melt within you; and that you have engaged this God against you, should be esteemed an evil and a bitter thing, *Jer.* 2. 19.

2. *Let your cryes be strong for peace:* Resolve never to give over, till he whom you

you have provoked to be your enemy, is become your friend. If you would have an intereſt in the favour of God, that favour muſt be intreated, and that with your whole heart: *Pſal.* 119. 58. *I intreated thy favour with my whole heart; be merciful to me according unto thy word.* The condemned priſoner at the bar, if there be hopes of ſpeeding, how doth he implore the Judges mercy? The beggar, who is ready to ſtarve for hunger, how doth he make a noiſe, *Bread, bread, for the Lords ſake, bread!* And you have more cauſe to cry for peace with God; for if you live and dye enemies, you are everlaſtingly undone. And to hearten you to prayer, let that Scripture be conſider'd; *Pſal.* 86. 5. *For thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

3. *The mediation of Jeſus Chriſt muſt be uſed.* The Apoſtle tells us, *That Chriſt came and preached to them which were far off, and to them which were nigh,* Epheſ. 2. 12. that is, both to the Jews and Gentiles: And that peace which he preached, by his bloud he purchaſed. The bloud of Chriſt hath a voice, which

voice is loud, and peace is the thing which his bloud cryes for. You must expect peace no other way but by the bloud of the Croſs. Believe that this bloud of Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, is ſufficient to make an atonement for your ſin; and being encouraged by the proffers and promiſes which he hath made in the Goſpel, be ſure to truſt in him, to be your Advocate with the Father, and he will not fail to mediate your peace; who ever believed on him and was confounded? Chriſt is ſtyled the *Prince of Peace, Iſai. 9. 6.* which ſhews that he hath an uncontroulable power to make peace, when, and for whom he pleaſes.

4. *Let the deſign of God in the Goſpel be conſider'd as matter of encouragement:* which deſign is to reconcile the world unto himſelf, 2 *Cor.* 5 19. *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes to them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* One great thing which keeps men off from God, is an unbelieving fear, that he is averſe from peace, rather forward to take vengeance upon the ſinner, then

ready

ready to forgive his ſin. But have they, who entertain ſuch fears, ever look'd into the Goſpel? If the Lord were ſo forward to kill and deſtroy, why hath he provided a City of refuge? why did he refuſe to ſpare his Son? why doth he proclaim himſelf a God abundant in loving kindneſs, goodneſs and truth, who hath mercy for thouſands, and forgives iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin? The more firmly you are perſwaded of his kindneſs and compaſſions, the ſooner you will yield to him.

5. *Lay hold upon the Lords own ſtrength, if you would have your peace made.* Conſult the forecited place, *Iſai.* 27.5. *Or let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me.* Though by the ſtrength of the Lord, we may underſtand Chriſt Jeſus, who is called, *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. Yet I rather think the Holy Ghoſt doth intimate to us in that place, that unleſs God doth draw us to himſelf by his own ſtrength, we ſhall never cloſe with him, but ſtill continue at a diſtance and enmity. Your neck is ſo much like an iron

sinew, that a less strength then that of God is insufficient to bow it to his yoak. Desire therefore, that this arm may be revealed, whereby your naturally stubborn spirits may be made tractable and obedient.

6. *Resolve to cover and keep nothing whereby the Lord hath been provoked.* He that covereth his sins shall not prosper. And as sin, which is the cause of war, must be forsaken, so you must *leave the tents of Rebels*; you must shake off your acquaintance with them that are the Lords profess'd enemies, and become companions of those that fear him.

USE III.

Of Advice, to those whose peace is made.

Endeavour after an assurance of it. Be restless, while it may be question'd, whether God be your friend, or whether he be your foe? His favour is a thing of so great value, of such sweetness, and will have so great an influence, as that it better deserves to be ensured then those things of the world, uncertainty about which doth so much torture the worldly minded. Here

Here I ſhall, firſt, *Lay down ſome ſigns of that peace which is true.* Secondly, *ſome arguments to perſwade believers to endeavour after an aſſurance of peace.*

The Signs are theſe.

1. *True peace follows after contrition and trouble for ſin.* Thou art at peace; but waſt thou ever troubled? if not, 'twere well if thy peace were gone, and trouble in the room of it. Thou art troubled at thy temporal loſſes, and when thy expectation from the creatures is fruſtrated; affliction alſo is troubleſom, and acknowledg'd an evil, but were thine eyes open to ſee the evil of ſin? was thy heart ever troubled for it? If guilt be made light of, if future puniſhment be not thought on, nor feared, if thou art unſenſible that ſin is a plague, and 'tis not noyſom to thee, if thy offending of God be the ſmalleſt matter of a thouſand, as long as thou feeleſt nothing of his hand, certainly thou waſt never broken, and ſo thy peace is not thy priviledg, but thy puniſhment. Chriſt *was anointed to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort thoſe who firſt have mourned,* *Iſai.* 61.1. and thoſe who have true reſt given

given them, were first weary and heavy laden.

2. *True peace is the fruit of the lips.* Isai. 57. 9. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near.* Peace is called the fruit of the lips, partly because 'tis obtained by prayer, partly because 'tis grounded upon the Gospel which is preached to us. Where true peace is, there hath been a crying and lifting up the voice for it. Oh what importunities have been used, that the Lord would cease to be an adversary? what wrestlings for his favour and friendship? This peace hath been valued above all the world, and the soul hath been contented to do any thing, to be any thing, so it may be at peace with God.

True peace is likewise grounded upon the word; 'tis a peace not of our own, but of the Lords speaking, *Psal.* 85. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, and to his Saints, but let them not turn again to folly.* And when he speaks peace, who then can make trouble? The word discovers the marks and characters of such

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as are indeed reconciled unto God, and become his children; that they prize the Lord Jesus above all, 1 *Pet.* 2.7. that they hunger and thirst after holiness and righteousness, *Matth.* 5.6. that they love and fear, and are desirous to follow their Father, *Ephes.* 5.1. And the Spirit by the Word doth work these gracious qualities and inclinations in our hearts, and discovers that he hath wrought them; and so we come to conclude that we are indeed reconciled.

3. *True peace is joyned with the spiritual combat.* The Spirit lusts against the flesh in all those who are reconciled unto God. There is a war with sin where-ever there is a peace with God. If any of our lusts, which are both the Lords enemies and our own too, are winked at, and provision is made for them that they may be fulfilled, we plainly shew we are still alienated from him. But if the remainders of corruption, if that evil which is present with us, be our burthen; and makes us cry out, *O wretched as we are*; *Rom.* 7.24. and we would esteem it one of the greatest happinesses, to be eased of that sin that dwells in us, this

shews

shews evidently, *that with our minds we serve the Law of God, that we are in Christ Jesus, and there is no condemnation to us*, *Rom.* 7. 25. and 8. 1.

I grant, that in a wicked man there may be a combat between his will and his conscience: Conscience may check and reproach him, for what his will hath a strong propension towards. But the combat between the flesh and Spirit is another thing: Here the very heart and will is renewed, holiness is longed after, sin, not only because of its guilt, but because of its filth, a burthen; and the heart is desirous that conscience were more awakened, that it might exercise greater power, and cause a greater restraint from what is evil; whereas the desire of unrenewed ones is, that conscience, when troubled, may be husht asleep, that so sin may be committed without any remorse.

4. *True peace is inconsistent with careless walking.* A Child of God, who hath attained unto peace, if he grows loose, and begins to live at random, presently his peace withers, and conscience grudges and is unsatisfied, especially if temptation

on to sin, that hath more of presumption, doth prevail. Canst thou omit thy duty? canst thou be proud and peevish? canst thou be excessive in thy recreations? canst thou be unwatchful over thy heart, and words, and wayes, and yet thy peace not at all abate? Assure thy self thy peace is but a meer delusion.

The quicknings of the Spirit may be without the comforts, but never the comforts without the quicknings. If thou grievest the Spirit by thy lukewarmness and formality to withdraw his assistance, and to leave thee under deadness, and thy peace still remains, that peace is not the Spirits fruit, but thy own hearts presumption.

Thus of the signs of peace.

Now follows the arguments to perswade unto endeavours after assurance that your peace is made,

1. *Assurance of peace will inflame your hearts with love.* How will the fire kindle, and your hearts burn within you, when you perceive, that you, even you in particular, have an interest in that love which passes knowledge? that God hath had thoughts of kindness and mercy towards

wards you, before the foundation of the world was laid, and that as his love is from everlasting, so to everlasting it will endure? 1 *John* 4.19. *We love him*, saies the Apostle, *because he first loved us*. And this manifestation and sense of the love of God will have the greater influence, because it usually finds us in sorrow, doubting whether ever favour will be extended towards such as we, fearing we are cast-awayes. Now when in this doleful darkness the light of Gods countenance is lifted up, and he shews his reconciled face, oh how do our affections work towards him! The Prodigal, who came home with a sad and doubtful mind, when he found himself in his Fathers armes, when he saw that so long absence and great exorbitancies had not extinguish'd his Fathers love, surely the workings of his love towards his Father again were beyond expression.

2. Assurance of peace *will fill you with joy and wonder*. You will admire to see how the case is altered with you; a while ago you were strangers, now friends and favourites; a while ago you had not obtained mercy, but now you have

have obtained mercy; a while ago dead in sin, but now you have attained to the first resurrection, and so are some of those happy ones, over whom the second death hath no power; a while ago the children of wrath, and sons of death, now adopted the children of God, and the heirs of glory! Well may your hearts rejoyce, and your joy no man taketh from you. This joy is not like that of the carnal and ungodly, 'tis built upon a surer foundation, affliction cannot damp it, and the thoughts of death and judgment, which quite spoil the mirth of the wicked, will but highten and increase it, it being an earnest of that fulness of joy, which after dissolution will be entred into.

3. Assurance of peace *will mightily engage you unto thankfulness.* This is one reason certainly, why *David* is called a man after the heart of God, because he was so much in praise. And assurance will make you abound in thanksgiving. Unbelieving doubts and fears cause us to be possessed with a dumb devil, so that though our receipts are vast, our returns are small: We misconstrue mercies, and say,

ſay, they are common to hypocrites, and that they are given in anger to us, and will ſerve only to increaſe both our ſin and puniſhment. But when we know that our peace is made, we ſhall alſo know our intereſt in thoſe bleſſings which are peculiar to Gods choſen ones; and as for outward mercies, they will be very much ſweetned, becauſe coming not only from the hand, but from the heart of God; and hereupon we ſhall be the more forward *to offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name*, Heb. 13. 15.

4. Aſſurance of peace *will quicken you to duty, and make you ſtedfaſt in obedience.* With what forwardneſs will you pray, when you know you ſhall be heard? with what willingneſs will you engage in other Ordinances, when you know that God will meet with you in them? When you attend upon the miniſtry of the Word, the Lord himſelf hath engaged to be your inſtructer; when you come to the table, he will certainly make you welcome, and will be, not only the inviter, but the feaſt likewiſe. Your expecta-

tions

tions may be justly raised, and you shall not be ashamed of them. ¶ What encouragement doth this afford? Add also, when you know that you are reconciled to God, and have had a sight and taste how good and gracious he is, you will cleave to him with the fuller purpose of heart; you will find so much sweetness in him, that all the delights of sin and the world, which Satan doth so much magnifie in his temptations, will be but cheap and mean in comparison.

5. Assurance of peace *will set you above the fears of affliction and of death*: Then you will be able to make application of that supporting truth unto your selves, *That all chastisements are from love, and tend unto your holiness and profit*, Heb. 12. 6, 10. and this will keep you from fainting and dismayedness of Spirit. Nay, death it self will rather be desired then feared, when you know it will admit you into the Lords presence, from whom, while in the body, you are absent, when you know, that as soon as *this earthly house of your tabernacle shall be dissolved, you shall have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1.

USE IV.

Of Direction, how peace may be kept and maintained.

1. *Let not your hearts be lifted up with pride after the Lord hath manifested himself to you.* Pride is a great enemy to peace. God revives and comforts the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones, *Isai.* 57. 15. Those who observe the workings of their own souls, shall find, after Gods manifesting himself, that pride is commonly one of the first sins which assaults them. The Apostle, after the abundance of revelations, was in great danger of being exalted above measure; therefore the messenger of Satan is sent to buffet him, that this self-exalting might be prevented. Oh do not think highly of your selves, do not censure and undervalue others; the more low you are in your own eyes, your joy and peace will be the more abiding.

2. *Be watchful even against little sins:* These will dead the heart, and grieve the Spirit, causing him to suspend his

sweet

ſweet influences, and make way for greater. Little ſins have their peculiar aggravations. How inexcuſable are we when we ſtand with God about a ſmall matter, and refuſe to do a little for him? Miſpence of a little time, a little exceſs in uſing of the creatures, a little frothineſs of mind, the ſmaller ſtirrings of pride and paſſion, and ſuch like, which are more commonly to be found in profeſſors, you muſt beware of, elſe theſe leſſer ſins, to your coſt and ſorrow, will be found great enough, to interrupt and break your peace.

3. *Eſpecially take heed of groſs tranſgreſſions which waſte the Conſcience.* When *David* would needs feed upon forbidden pleaſures, he loſt his peace, and the joy of Gods ſalvation, *Pſal.* 51. Groſſer falls do break the bones, and raiſe a new ſtorm in the Conſcience, where before a calm was. By theſe you will not only cauſe the Lords enemies to reproach *religion*, but alſo your own hearts to reproach *you*. Oh therefore cry, *Uphold me continually with thy free Spirit*, and *keep back thy ſervant from preſumptuous ſins.*

4. *Do the work of the Lord diligently.* God doth moſt conſtantly manifeſt himſelf to thoſe, who moſt conſtantly ſeek and ſearch for him with their whole heart, *Jer.*29.13. Never offer unto God a ſacrifice, but let it have *ſound inwards.* The Pſalmiſt tells us, *That the Lords countenance doth behold the upright*, Pſal. 11.*ult.* When we are ſincere, and ſerve him with our whole ſoul, then he ſhews his face, and in his looks we may read his love, and through Chriſt his accepting of us.

5. *Let your deſign in begging the continuance of peace be this, that hereby you may be encouraged to do more for God, and to cleave the cloſer to him.* Aim at his glory as well as your own ſatisfaction in this matter. *Lord! I deſire a continued aſſurance of thy love, but 'tis that I may love thee more, and be more zealous for thine honour, and labour in thy work with greater life and vigour.*

6. *Let it be your dayly practiſe to walk with God.* Be not religious only by fits, this argues an heart much diſtempered.

Here

Here I shall give a directory how to walk every day.

1. When your eyes are first open, lift them up to God, let your hearts be well seasoned with holy thoughts and affections; they will be in the better frame all the day.

2. Allot some time for secret prayer and searching of the Scripture, twice every day at least: And servants, which are not masters of their own time, if they cannot so conveniently pray at one time, should be sure to catch hold of another opportunity.

3. Let not meditation be omitted. One quarter of an hour, at least, in thinking upon some truth, the hearing or reading of which hath a little moved you, or which doth most concern you, may be well spared.

4. Be serious in family duties, walk in in the house with a perfect heart, and conscienciously do the duties of your places and relations, because the word stands much upon these, and hereby Religion is adorned.

5 Accustom your selves to thoughts of God, and let your desires be fre-

quently ascending towards him.

6. In worldly business, remember Conscience is to be kept void of offence; take heed of injustice, defrauding, over-reaching.

7. Let not the world, when it flows into your hands, insinuate it self into your hearts.

8. Study to excell in those things which may make Religion amiable in the eyes of the world, as meekness, humility, contentedness with your condition, charitableness, quietness, refusing to backbite and defame any.

9. Be vigilant against the sin which doth most easily beset you, the sin of your constitution, the sin of your calling, the sin which heretofore did bear the greatest sway in you.

10. Resist temptation at the first appearing of it; start back from Satans baits, as one would do who is ready to tread upon a Serpent.

11. Let not Christian liberty degenerate into carnal licentiousness, use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; remember you are the Disciples of the crucified Jesus, and so in your walking there must

be

be not an enmity, but a ſuitableneſs to his Croſs.

12. Bad company abſtain from, and be not intimate with lukewarm profeſſours; when neceſſitated to be with them, be jealous over your ſelves; never ſinfully comply with, but rather reprove them.

13. Deſign to get ground upon ſome ſin or other every day; every day let ſome progreſs be made in the work of mortification.

14. Obſerve providences, and get the good of them; let loſſes and croſſes wean you from the world, let afflictions imbitter ſin, and let mercies indear the Father of them.

15. Reſt not in Ordinances, but conſider you muſt be reckoned with how you have improved them; If in theſe you neither *meet* with God, nor *miſs* him, 'tis a bad ſign.

16. Keep a watch before the door of your lips; oaths, falſhood, vanity, filthineſs, your communication muſt be free from. Be alſo ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak, for in multitude of words there wanteth not ſin.

17. If you fall, lye not where you are fallen, cry immediately for pardon and healing; let the wound, while green, be cured before it fester.

18. Have daily recourse to Christ, to cover the sins of daily incursion; you have as much need of daily pardon, as you have of dayly bread.

19. Live as Strangers and Pilgrims; look upon the World as your Inn, and Heaven as your Home, and act as within view of Death, and Judgment, and Eternity.

20. At evening reflect how you have spent the day. An Heathen of old gave this notable advice,

Μηδ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὄμμασι πρὸς δέξασθαι,
Πρὶν τῶν ἡμερινῶν ἔργων τρὶς ἕκαστον ἐπιλθεῖν·
Πῆ παρέβην, τί δ' ἔρεξα, τί μοὶ δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη.

Which may be thus Englished.

Never let sleep, which senses tyes,
At any night close up thine eyes,
Before the actions of the day
Thou thrice and seriously doest weigh;
Where have I sinn'd? what have I done?
What duty have I let alone?

If

If you would walk after this manner, how perfect might your peace be? and how much might your paſſage be ſweetned through this vale of tears?

I have done with the third Doctrine: I ſhall be very brief in the two which remain.

Doct. 4. The fourth Doctrine is this, *That when ſinners will not ſee, they are ſmitten many times with ſpiritual blindneſs, and the things of their peace are in a way of judgment hid from them.*

The Lord hides the things of their peace from them ſeveral wayes.

1. *He cauſes his Spirit to withdraw:* 'Tis the Spirits work to enlighten dark underſtandings; but if the Spirit be gone, how great muſt the darkneſs be?

2. *The Lord gives men up to the perverſe reaſonings and counſels of their own hearts*; and then a thouſand abſurdities will, by the carnal mind, be imagined in the doctrine which is according to godlineſs; and how burthenſome will the practiſe of godlineſs be made to appear?

3. The

3. *The Lord permits Satan to blind them*; and by his means their hatred of light, and of the works of light, is very much augmented; and hereupon, either more abominable prophaneneſs, or ſtrong deluſions follow.

4. *The Lord in his providence cauſes ſeveral things to happen*, which ſinners ſtumble at, and by which they are more confirmed in their prejudices againſt the Word, and in their infidelity. The righteous are ſuffer'd ſometimes to fall into ſin, and many times into great diſtreſs: The wicked often proſper in the world, and live and dye in a falſe peace: And upon this the ungodly are more darkned and hardned.

5. In all this the Lord acts as a Judge, and intends to puniſh their refuſing to be enlightned, and yet he is not the Author of ſin: *He is light*, 1 *John* 1. 5. and no darkneſs can come from him. All ignorance and miſtake is from corrupted nature, being wrought upon by the Prince of darkneſs.

Neither is the juſtice of God to be quarrelled at for dealing thus with them that reject illumination.

4. The

1. The merit of their ſin is great. *Neſcire eſt ignorantiæ, nolle ſcire eſt ſuperbiæ*; there is abundance of pride in them that are unwilling to be informed, and a great love to evil deeds, and alſo mighty ingratitude, for light is a very great priviledge.

2. This puniſhment is very ſutable; What more equal, then that thoſe, who would not be enlightned by the Spirit of the Lord, and directed into the paths of peace, ſhould be ſuffered to be beguiled by Satan and their own ſpirits, and ſo be miſguided and loſt for ever?

Uſe 1. Take heed of ſinning againſt the light, for fear it be put out in obſcurity. The clearer the light ſhines, the more it aggravates the works of darkneſs. Let not the luſts of your hearts be cheriſhed and fulfilled, leſt the light of your heads be hereby extinguiſhed.

Uſe 2. Do not unwarrantably ſurmiſe, that the things of your peace are in judgment hid from you. All blindneſs is not judicial. If thou wouldſt fain know the will of God and do it, God upon thy *asking will give wiſdom liberally without upbraiding*, *Jam.* 1. He will

will not fail by his Spirit to inſtruct thee, who hath made thee thus willing to be inſtructed.

Doct. 5. The laſt Doctrine follows, *When ſouls are left under darkneſs, their ſtate is wretched and deplorable.*

Conſider, with ſuch

1. *God is extreamly angry.* When he puniſheth ſin with ſin he is moſt of all diſpleaſed; and truly he cannot puniſh it with a worſe evil then it ſelf is. In temporal judgments, 'tis to be hoped, the Lord aims at our reformation and amendment; but when he gives up any to blindneſs of mind, and a reprobate ſenſe, 'tis a ſign his love and mercy have done with them. As by the Spirit of God believers are ſealed up to the day of redemption, ſo by the ſpirit of ſlumber the unbelievers are ſealed up to the day of deſtruction.

2. With ſuch Satan doth what he pleaſes; he leads them along, and how little do they perceive whither they are going? how do means make them worſe? how bold are they in ſin? how quickly are they like to fill up the meaſure of

their

their iniquity, and grow rotten ripe for vengeance? and when that vengeance overtakes them, then they will weep over themselves, as Christ doth over *Jerusalem*, and too late lament their own misery, when 'twill be impossible to have it removed.

Use 1. Earnestly intreat, that this may never be yours, which was the punishment of *Jerusalem*: And if you would not lye under the like plague, you must not be guilty of the like sin, namely, rejecting Christ, and the Gospel of peace.

Use 2. Pitty those who tread in *Jerusalems* steps, and provoke the Lord to close their eyes; tell them of their danger, which they themselves do not perceive; awaken them out of their Lethargie, if it be possible, before it become past remedy.

Use 3. If the Lord, when others are blinded, is become both light and salvation to any of you, break out into praise. The light is marvellous which you are called to, and marvellous should be your joy. You have that eye-salve, with which few eyes are annointed, you have that Spirit which the world doth not receive.

You

You were born blind as well as others, but a miracle of grace hath been wrought upon you; the vail is taken off, and you see the Lord, and your interest in him, how should all that is within you bless him? This present light, wherewith you are visited, is, as it were the dawning of the day of glory, and a certain forerunner of the light that's everlasting.

THE END.

ERRATA.

The First Part.

PAge 5. line 13. for *Him* read *Me*; p. 7. l. 20. for *deadful* r. *dreadful*; p. 10. l. 11. f. *nelp* r. *help*; p. 12. l. 22. f. *hepleſs* r. *helpleſs*; p. 22. l. 17. del. *to be*; p. 41. l. 5 f. *de* r. *be*; p. 46. l. 12. f. *wayes* r. *wages*; p. 86. l. 6. f. *vow* r. *voice*,

The Second Part.

PAge 4. line 16. for *know* read *knew*; p. 5. l. 19. f. *eyes* r. *eye*; p. 15. l. 7 f. *thlngs* r. *things*; p. 16. l. 1. f. *ſting* r. *ſtung*; p. 33. l. 4. f. πάνδων r. πάντων; for ἰδίνας r. εἰδέναι; p. 35. l. 15. f. *vanity* r. *iniquity*; p. 38. l. 26. f. *queſtioned* r. *quickned*; p. 43. l. 13. f. *ſit* r. *ſat*; p. 60. l. 16. f. ζύφ& r. ζόφ&; p. 69. l. 27. f. *lathargy* r. *lethargie*; p. 74. l. 16. f. *deep* r. *ſleep*; p. 80. l. 9. after *not* r. *reſt*; p. 107. l. 23. f. *maſtered* r. *unaſſeſſed*; p. 118. l. 7. f. *cruclſied* r. *crucified*; p. 149. l. 7. f. *ſhould* r. *ſhall*; p. 151. l. 15. f. *Nehem.* r. *Nahum.*